

NEW YORK, AUGUST 27, 1926

No. 1091

Price 8 Cents

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

ONLY A FACTORY BOY;
OR, WINNING A NAME FOR HIMSELF. *By A SELF-MADE MAN.*



"Back!" cried Will, in ringing tones, as he dropped the cash-box and raised the fainting girl from the floor "Back, all of you! There is no fire." The frightened girls, however, continued to press toward the closed elevator

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ONLY A FACTORY BOY

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CHAPTER I.—Which Introduces the Hero, Heroine and Others.

"Say, old man, is it true that you've been promoted to the office?" said Joe Rylance to his chum, Will Leggatt, a sturdy, good-looking boy of about his own age, as the two boys met at the gate of the Roanoke Knitting Mill a few minutes after the six-o'clock whistle sounded announcing that work was over for the day.

"It's true, all right," replied Will with a glowing face. "Beginning with Monday, I am to take Harry Harper's place as time-keeper and general office assistant."

"Gee! You're lucky. I don't see how you got the job. You haven't any pull with the super or the company that I know of."

"Not the ghost of a pull."

"You're the most popular person in the mill, both with the men and the girls. Mr. Brown knows that, of course, so maybe that had something to do with your promotion."

"Possibly; but I wouldn't like to swear to it," laughed Will.

"Tell me how it came about."

"I was called into Mr. Brown's office this afternoon. That's unusual, you know. He never has anything to do with the hands unless some serious charge has been preferred against them. As I hadn't done anything to incur the censure of the foreman in my department I couldn't imagine what was in the wind. When I entered the super's office he told me in a brusque tone to take a seat alongside his desk. Then he put me through a kind of civil service examination, and wound up by offering me the job in the office. I was so astonished that I nearly had a fit."

"I should have had two fits if he'd offered me the job," laughed Joe. Go on."

"I accepted the place and thanked him for it. He explained in a general way what my duties would be, and told me that I was to take instructions from the head bookkeeper——"

"You mean Mr. Bacon, Jessie Bacon's father?"

"Yes."

"I guess that suits you to a T," smiled Joe.

"Yes, I like Mr. Bacon."

"But you like Jessie better," chuckled Joe.

"Cut it out, Joe. Well, I'm to report on Monday morning fifteen minutes before the hands arrive to keep tab on them."

"The girls will be tickled to death to have you as timekeeper, because if they happen to arrive late——"

"They'll be reported and docked as usual."

"You don't mean that."

"Yes, I do. I mean to do my duty. That's what I'm hired for. I always have done the right thing by the company, and I always will as long as I'm in its employ."

"Suppose I'm late, you'd overlook it, wouldn't you?"

"No. You'd have to take your medicine like the others. I shall play no favorites."

"I know one you'll favor, anyway," nodded Joe.

"Who is that?"

"Jessie Bacon."

Will shook his head.

"Where would I land if I favored her? She's never late, anyway."

"The girls won't do a thing to you if you shut any of them out after seven."

"Can't help it. During business hours I will represent the company, and there is no sentiment about a corporation."

"I know somebody who will be as mad as thunder when he hears you have secured Harper's place," said Joe with a chuckle.

"Who?"

"Percy Grant."

"Why?"

"Because he's been pulling wires to get the posish for himself ever since he heard Harper was going to leave."

"That's the first I've heard about it. I thought he was too tony to work."

"Not if he can get a job to suit him. An office position is what he's looking for. He would like to get in the bank, but there is no opening. The factory office is the next best place to work up in the village. He told some of the boys that his father had spoken to the president of the mill and that he was sure of getting on in Harper's place."

"I'm afraid he'll be disappointed."

"Looks like it now. I don't see how you came to get it if the justice put in an application for his son. One would think you wouldn't have a show against Percy, for his father is a henchman of the political leader of the district."

"It does look odd that I should catch on, espe-

cially if Percy Grant was after it. With me it's a case of the job seeking me, not me the job."

"You've got it on your merits. I'll bet somebody has been speaking to the super in your favor."

"I don't know anybody who would take the trouble to do me that favor."

"Maybe Mr. Bacon did. You stand well with him, and he's head of the counting-room since Davenport left three months ago. He's in a position to reach Mr. Brown's ear. I'll bet nine dollars that's how you got the job."

"You may be right," replied Will thoughtfully. "Mr. Bacon always treats me nicely when I call at his house. I guess I'll be able to find out through Jessie."

At that moment the girls began coming out by twos and threes, chatting and laughing together. Every one of them had a smile and friendly bow for Will Leggatt. They all envied Jessie Bacon because Will was her steady company. There were thirty girls of all ages from twelve to twenty-five in the establishment, and the majority of them looked on Jessie almost as a sister. She lived with her father and a maiden aunt, her mother being dead, in a little cottage on the cliffs just beyond the environs of Roanoke village, which was situated in a hollow within sound of the sea, and on the banks of a river that furnished the power to run the machinery of the knitting mill and other industries that made the village, though it was half a mile from the railroad station, a thriving place.

She had many admirers, as a matter of course. Percy Grant, the well-dressed son of Stephen Grant, justice of the peace, lawyer and local politician, honored her with a whole lot of affection, which, however, she did not seem to appreciate at the valuation that Percy put upon it, for, to his great disgust, she showed a decided preference for the society of Will Leggatt, who, in young Grant's estimation, was "only a factory boy." Percy often came to the mill for the purpose of walking part of the way home with Jessie, but it was very seldom that he had the girl to himself. As the girls began trooping out of the gate, happy that work was over for the day, Joe Rylance nudged Will and said:

"Here comes Percy Grant now, looking as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth, which is a sure sign that he hasn't heard that he's dished out of the factory office job."

Will looked and saw his rival sauntering up with a self-satisfied smirk on his countenance, swinging a light cane with a sang-froid air. Just then Jessie Bacon came out with a bunch of girls. They clustered in front of Will and Joe and began to chatter to the boys like a lot of magpies. Joe grabbed his own particular divinity, Gussie Sweet, by the arm and walked off with her.

"Aren't you just too rude for anything, Joe Rylance!" she exclaimed. "I had something particular to say to Will."

"It will keep till tomorrow, then you can warble it in his ear. Just now I have something particular to say to you myself."

Gussie had to submit, and off they went together. The other girls soon left Jessie and Will together.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Jessie," said Percy coming up and ignoring Leggatt's presence. "May I have the honor of seeing you to your home?"

"If you wish to walk with my father and me I have no objection," she answered with very little encouragement in her tone.

"It will give me great pleasure to accompany you part of the way," he replied, devoutly wishing that her father had been obliged to work overtime, as he often had to do. "I hope soon to receive your congratulations, Miss Jessie," he added with a self-complacent air.

"About what?" she asked in surprise.

"I am going to take Harry Harper's place in the office here."

"I guess you don't mean that," she said.

"Yes, I do. I shall be time-keeper, you know, then, and if you should come late to work any morning I shall let you in and not say anything about it. Aren't you glad?"

"You must be joking, Mr. Grant. Harry Harper's place is already filled."

"Already filled!" gasped Percy. "Impossible! My father spoke to the president of the company for me, and he promised to consider my application."

"Mr. Brown, the superintendent, gave the place to Will Leggatt this afternoon."

Percy looked as though he was going to have a fit.

"You must be mistaken, Miss Jessie. A common factory boy wouldn't get the position ahead of me," he said, puffing out his chest consequentially.

"I don't consider Will Leggatt a common factory boy," flashed Jessie indignantly. "I think he is a most uncommon one. You ought to be more of a gentleman than to make such a slurring remark in his presence."

"Pardon me, Miss Jessie, I did not observe that the person to whom you refer was present," said Percy with a sneer, for he was furious at the defense the girl put up on behalf of his hated rival, as well as at the bare suggestion that Will had got the position he was after. "I thought he had sense enough to walk off when he saw a gentleman talking to you."

This second shot made Will hot under the collar.

"If you had any sense, Percy Grant, you would not butt in where you're not wanted," he said in a pointed tone.

"Don't address me, you common loafer," snorted Percy, glaring at Leggatt.

"The term applies more to yourself than to me, for I never heard that you have done any work in your life," retorted Will angrily.

"How dare you call me a loafer? I've a great mind to chastise you for it," said Percy, raising his light cane in a threatening way.

The idea of dudish Percy Grant attempting to chastise Will Leggatt seemed so exceedingly amusing to Jessie that she burst into a merry peal of laughter. Percy grew desperate at that. He felt that unless he sustained his prestige he was lost. So on the spur of the moment, and without calculating the consequences, he struck Will across the face with his cane, raising a livid mark on the flesh.

The factory boy couldn't stand for that.

Biff! His right fist shot out and Percy caught a blow on the jaw that sent him spinning backward to the ground, where he landed with a shock that dazed him and sent his cane in one direction and his hat in another.

CHAPTER II.—Describes How Will Whips His Enemy, Meets A Stranger, And Is Arrested For Assault.

"Oh, Will!" cried Jessie in a sympathetic tone. "Did he hurt you much?"

"He hurt me as much as he could, confound him!" replied Leggatt, stepping forward and standing over Percy. "Get up and defend yourself, you coward! I'm not half through with you. You've left your mark on me, so I mean to return the favor."

Percy sat up in the dust and began to feel of his jaw in a tender way.

"Don't hit him again, Will," interposed Jessie. "He isn't worth it. I shall never speak to or notice him in any way again."

The girl's words aroused Percy to a pitch of vindictive passion. He scrambled to his feet, snatched up a stone and threw it full at Will's head. Fortunately, blinded by rage as he was, his aim was poor. As it was the stone whizzed by Leggatt's head with a speed that made the boy gasp. Had the missile landed on Will's forehead, as it might have done, he would have been knocked senseless instantly. Jessie herself turned white at Will's narrow escape. Leggatt had intended to comply with the girl's request and let Percy off without any further punishment, but this dastardly act was more than he could stand.

He rushed at Percy, who took to his heels at once, like the coward he was. Away they both went down the main street of the village as if engaged in a foot-race. Percy was no match for Will in speed or anything else. The gap between them closed rapidly, and two hundred yards from the factory Will nailed him. Biff! Swat! Whack! Percy went down with an eye that would be decorated on the morrow, and a nose that began to swell at once like a damaged oyster.

He lay in a help blubbering like a little kid, for he had never been so roughly handled in his life before. Will reached down, grabbed him by the collar of his jacket and yanked him on his feet. Percy struck out blindly and landed one blow on Will's injured cheek. Leggatt let go of him and soaked him good and hard in the jaw with both fists. With a scream of pain and terror Percy fell all over himself.

"Help! Help! I'm being murdered!" he shouted at the top of his lungs.

Will gave him a contemptuous look and walked off down the street to the post-office, feeling only half satisfied with the satisfaction he had taken out of the dude. Percy got up and leaned blubbering against a big oak tree for a few moments, and then started for home, determined to have Leggatt arrested and punished for assault.

"Hello! What's happened to you?" asked Silas Scudder when Will entered the store. "Been fighting?"

The postmaster happened to be alone at the moment and he peered at his nephew through his old-fashioned horn spectacles. He was a small, wizened specimen of humanity, about sixty years of age.

"I can't say that I've been fighting, Uncle Silas," Will replied to Mr. Scudder's question. "Percy Grant struck me a cowardly blow in the

face with his cane and I made him look and feel sicker than he's ever been in his life before."

The postmaster shook his head in a deprecating way.

"You may get into trouble over it. His father is justice of the peace and a man of some importance in this village."

"I'm not afraid of his father. I've got a witness to prove that Percy assaulted me with his cane and afterward threw a stone at me which, had it hit me, would have landed me in the graveyard most likely. He's a vindictive little beast, and I didn't give him more than half that he deserved," said Will in a determined tone. "But I've got to make tracks for the night mail. I suppose you've got the bag ready?"

As Will trundled his bicycle out from the back part of the store, Mr. Scudder tossed the mail-bag over the counter and started to wait on a customer that had just entered.

Will grabbed the bag and dragged it outside. Throwing it across the front of the saddle he mounted the wheel and rode off, spurring down the street at a lively rate, for he knew he barely had time to catch the train if it was on time, which it generally was. The train was just coming in sight as he dismounted on the platform of the station. The Roanoke House 'bus and several wagons were also on hand. Will carried the bag to the end of the platform, where the mail-car stopped, and waited. The train rolled in, and the postal clerk tossed out a bag and took in the one Will handed him. Only one passenger got off the train on this occasion. He was a tall, well-built man of perhaps forty, with a dark, saturnine face that did not invite confidence. As the train pulled out he stood looking after it. He turned around as Will passed him, dragging the bag, and looked at the boy. The factory boy didn't like the searching stare that the stranger favored him with.

"Hold on, boy," the dark-featured man said.

"What do you want?" asked Will.

"Do you live in Roanoke?"

"I do."

"What sort of a place is it?"

"A good-sized village. It's half a mile from here. That 'bus will take you to the Roanoke House, on Main Street."

"You're connected with the post-office, I believe?" said the stranger with a quick glance at the mail-bag.

"I am."

"Is your father the postmaster?"

"No. My uncle keeps the post-office and runs a general store."

"Your uncle, eh?" said the stranger. "Do you look after the mails, or does he?" he added carelessly.

"Mr. Scudder attends to the mail and the store, too. I work at the mill."

"Did you say your uncle's name was Scudder?"

"I did."

"Silas Scudder?" asked the man eagerly.

"Yes."

"A small man about sixty or thereabouts?"

"That's right. Do you know him?" asked Will, looking narrowly at the stranger, who, to say the truth, he did not fancy much.

"I think I have met him," replied the newcomer in an off-hand way, an exultant flash shooting from his eyes. "Might I ask your name?"

"Will Leggatt."

The stranger uttered a low whistle and favored the boy with a look of keen attention.

"By the way, I suppose you know 'most everybody in the village?"

"Pretty nearly everybody."

"Know a man named Edward Bacon, who has a daughter called Jessie?"

"I do," replied Will, regarding the stranger with fresh interest.

"What's his business?"

"He's head bookkeeper at the Roanoke Knitting Mill."

"Whereabouts in the village does he live?"

"He doesn't live in the village. He has a cottage on the cliffs about a mile from the mill."

"I suppose his daughter keeps house for him?"

"No. She works at the mill. Mr. Bacon's sister is housekeeper."

"Does Mr. Bacon own the cottage?"

"No; he rents it from Squire Grant."

"You say you work at the mill?"

"Yes."

"Then I suppose what ever mail is directed to the mill you carry there?"

"The night mail I carry with me in the morning. The superintendent sends a messenger for the morning's mail," replied Will, wondering what interest the stranger could have in the matter.

"Then I presume a letter addressed to Mr. Bacon would be delivered to him at the mill?"

"Of course."

"That's all. Here's a dollar for you."

The stranger shoved a bill into Will's hand and sprang into the bus, the driver of which had been patiently waiting for him.

"I wonder who he is," muttered the factory boy, mounting his wheel as the bus drove off and taking the bag on before him. "Seems to know Mr. Scudder, all right, and appears to be interested in Mr. Bacon. He may be all right, but I don't like his face. I wish he hadn't given me the dollar. I don't care to be tipped as if I were a servant. However, it'll have to go this time, for I can't very well return it to him. I dare say I'll see him again. It's my opinion he's come down here to see Mr. Bacon. I wonder what about?"

When Will reached the store he threw the mail-bag on the counter, put his wheel away, and made a break for the room back of the store which served as a sitting-room and dining-room combined. He was as hungry as a hunter, and wanted his supper as soon as he could get it. Mrs. Watts, who kept house for Mr. Scudder, was eating her supper, and she was keeping Will's portion warm in the oven of the kitchen stove.

"Sit down, Will," she said, "and I will bring your supper in."

"Don't move, Mrs. Watts. I'll bring it in myself," replied the boy.

It didn't take him much more than a minute to transfer the dishes to the table, and then he set to with a keen appetite.

"How did you get that red mark across your face?" asked Mrs. Watts, observing the welt that Percy Grant's cane had raised.

Will explained the trouble, and told how he had served the justice's son out for it.

"You did just right," said the housekeeper promptly. "I hope it may be a lesson to him."

As Will pushed his chair back with a sigh of satisfaction, having eaten about everything in

sight, Mr. Scudder opened the door leading from the store and called him. Will obeyed the summons.

"Mr. Jones, the head constable, is here looking for you. I'm afraid you've got yourself in trouble for striking young Grant."

"Don't you worry about me, Uncle Silas. I'm ready to face the music for anything I do. If I'm arrested for slugging Percy I'll show him up in a way he won't like."

He went forward to meet the officer.

"Good-evening, Mr. Jones. I understand that you want to see me," he said.

"I do, Will; but my errand is not a pleasant one. I've got a warrant for your arrest, signed by the squire, charging you with a vicious assault on his son, Percy. I hope you will be able to justify yourself when I produce you at the squire's office in the morning. In the meantime it is my duty to put you in the lock-up over night. You can avoid this by having your uncle go bail for your appearance."

Mr. Scudder, who stood near by, hastened to say that he owned no property, nor had money enough to qualify himself as security for his nephew.

The constable received his statement in surprise.

"The bail ought to be small," he said. "Surely, Mr. Scudder, you wouldn't let your nephew remain in the lock-up all night if you could prevent it?"

"But I can't prevent it," insisted the postmaster. "If my nephew gets himself into trouble he must suffer the consequences."

"I suppose I'll have to go to the lock-up," said Will in a tone of resignation, "since my uncle says he is unable to do anything for me."

Constable Jones favored Mr. Scudder with a half contemptuous look and told Will to follow him. When they got outside he said:

"You shall occupy a spare bed at my house tonight, Will. I think it would be unfair to lock you up on a charge that will probably amount to nothing in the end. It was an outrage for the squire to insist that I serve the warrant tonight when I could easily have found you in the morning at the mill. As I am responsible for your appearance in the morning, all you need do is to give me your word that you will not attempt to give me the slip, and I will take you to my house as my guest tonight."

"Certainly I'll give you my word, Mr. Jones. This charge is ridiculous. I shall call a witness at my examination in the morning who will make Percy Grant and his accusation look like thirty cents," replied the boy.

"I'm glad to hear it. You are considered one of the best boys in the village, and the news of your arrest will cause much surprise and comment."

On their way to the constable's house, which adjoined the lock-up, Will told his story of the trouble he had had with Percy Grant that evening, and the officer agreed that Jessie's testimony at his examination would knock the charge into a cocked hat.

Will spent a pleasant evening with Mr. Jones and his family, and when the hour for retiring came he was shown to a spare chamber and left to turn in at his pleasure.

CHAPTER III.—In Which Silas Scudder Has A Visitor.

The departure of his nephew in the custody of the head constable of the village did not seem to worry Silas Scudder a whole lot.

One might have supposed that he had very little interest in the boy. As a matter of fact, he liked Will as much as his nature would permit him to like any human being, but he liked his money better. After watching the constable and the boy disappear in the darkness he turned to a case of canned goods he was opening when the constable arrived, and bending over it began taking the tins out. While he was thus engaged the door opened and the dark-featured stranger who had questioned Will Leggatt at the station walked in. The postmaster, who was a bit deaf, did not hear the door open and close again, and therefore continued his occupation. The man looked around and spied the storekeeper a few yards away. After looking at him for a moment or two from head to foot he advanced and slapped him on the shoulder. Mr. Scudder straightened up and glanced at his visitor, whom he at first took for a customer, but as their eyes met, and a sardonic smile wreathed the stranger's mouth, the postmaster gave a gasp of surprise and consternation.

"Curtis Jewell!" he ejaculated in a faltering tone.

"Yes, I'm Curtis Jewell. Aren't you tickled to death to see me? You look it, upon my word you do," chuckled the newcomer. "I suppose the Old Boy himself wouldn't have surprised you more—not so much perhaps, for when old friends meet, you know——"

Mr. Scudder made a deprecating gesture and looked helplessly at his visitor, whose unexpected appearance seemed to be a great shock to him.

"What's the matter, Silas? Why don't you say something? I suppose if you'd known I was coming you'd have had the fatted calf killed and waiting for me, eh, you old rascal?"

The speaker chuckled again and punched the postmaster playfully in the ribs. Mr. Scudder sprang back as if he didn't appreciate that kind of fun.

"What brought you to Roanoke, and where have you been all these years?" he asked as soon as he found his voice.

"Business brought me here—business of the greatest importance," replied Jewell. "In reply to your other question I will say that I have been enjoying myself as a gentleman should since I had the pleasure of seeing your physiognomy, which, as near as I can recall just now, was ten years ago in Salem."

"You look prosperous," said Mr. Scudder, noting Jewell's swell appearance.

"I am, after a fashion," replied his visitor.

"How did you learn I was in this village?"

"Quite by accident, old pal. I met your nephew, Will Leggatt, at the station, and he told me that you had the honor of holding down the important and lucrative government position of postmaster of this place."

"You met him?" with a frightened look.

"I did. He's grown to be a fine lad. I should never have recognized him if he hadn't mentioned your name accidental like."

"You were speaking to him, then?" said the postmaster nervously.

"Sure, I was; but don't be afraid—I didn't say anything about you."

"I should hope not," replied Mr. Scudder, looking somewhat relieved.

"No, as long as you and I pull together I'm as mute as a mop-stick on the subject of Master Leggatt; but if you should try to cross me——"

"Why should I do that?" asked the postmaster hastily. "I haven't any hold on you."

"Quite right, Silas, you never said a truer word. The boot is on the other leg. It is I who have a hold on you," said Jewell with a chuckle.

"Hush, hush! Somebody might hear you," replied Mr. Scudder in a panic.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! You're as nervous as an old woman, Silas. Brace up, and hand me out the best cigar you have in the house. Don't be afraid, I'm going to pay you for it."

Mr. Scudder went behind the counter, opened a glass case and handed his visitor one cigar.

"What's to pay, Silas?" asked Jewell, putting his hand in his pocket.

"Nothing," mumbled the storekeeper.

"Nothing, eh? You're getting liberal in your old age. Well, seeing it's you, I'll let you stand treat. Hand me a match, Silas."

Jewell bit off the end of the cigar, lighted it and puffed away in silence for a moment or two as he leaned lightly on the edge of the glass case, in a negligent attitude, and gazed reflectively at a stuffed bird hanging in the window. Mr. Scudder stood with both hands on the counter watching the man whose presence affected him with a nervous dread, and waiting for him to speak first.

"You must be pretty well fixed by this time, Silas," said Jewell, turning abruptly upon the postmaster.

"What do you mean?" quavered Mr. Scudder.

"You know what I mean, you old rascal. I'll bet you've a fat bank account."

"No, no; I haven't anything," gasped the storekeeper in a kind of blue funk.

"Suffering with the same old complaint, eh?" said Jewell with a sarcastic laugh. "I never knew you to admit that you had anything, even when that boy's father was sending you regular monthly remittances."

"Hush!" ejaculated Mr. Scudder, looking fearfully around the store, as if there was a listener hidden behind every bale, bag or barrel in the place. "Would you ruin me?"

"Ruin you, Silas! I could have done that long ago had I a mind to. I could have bled you, too. Made you come down handsomely. But I didn't. I was nursing something better—something much better than you, Silas."

"Eh?" said Mr. Scudder, putting his hand back of his ear.

"Deaf, are you? Always thought you put that on when money happened to be mentioned. I said I had something better to engage my attention than blackmailing you."

"Oh!" exclaimed the postmaster with a sudden show of interest. "What did you have?"

"My uncle."

"Your uncle! I didn't know that——"

"I had one, eh? Yes, fortunately I had, or I should have been compelled to fall back on you, and I'm afraid you'd have been but a poor substitute. Still, any port in a storm, Silas, so you

can thank your stars that I had an uncle. Small good he would have done me, however, if his daughter—his only and favorite child—hadn't been self-willed enough to run away with and marry a chap that, in her father's estimation, didn't amount to shucks. He never got over the shock. He shut her out of his heart and home, and shut himself up in his magnificent house with his books and his grouch for sole companions. Are you following me, Silas?"

The postmaster, with his hand behind his ear, in an attitude of strict attention, nodded, while his little bright eyes twinkled.

"After a time he got very lonesome, and having destroyed his will, it is probable he began to consider how he should dispose of his property, as he was wealthy, for he realized like other rich men have, that he couldn't take his possessions to the next world with him, which is a very fortunate thing for heirs in general. Maybe you've been considering that important point yourself and have done the right thing by the boy—that is, drawn up a will in his favor leaving him everything of which you may die possessed."

"Don't talk of dying," said Mr. Scudder with a shudder. "I don't expect to die for a long time yet—a very long time."

"No, I suppose not," replied Jewell ironically. "You expect to dry up and blow away some time in the dim and misty future. Then you'll make a nice seasoned bit of timber for the Old Boy to feed his furnaces with."

"Ugh! You give me the shivers. Why do you talk that way?"

"Because I like to make you feel happy, Silas," returned the visitor with a short laugh. "Well, as I was saying, my respected uncle, who had never honored me with a thought while his angel daughter was enthroned in his heart, suddenly recollected your humble servant and sent for me to visit him. Did I accept the invitation? I should remark that I did. Bless you, Silas, I didn't hold anything against the old curmudgeon. I packed my grip and reached him by the first train. That will account for my sudden disappearance from Salem and you. I dare say you missed me dreadfully, and shed a few crocodile tears. Probably you took immediate advantage of my absence to pack up your worldly possessions and come down to this village, which is somewhat out of the way, with the boy. As you haven't heard from me in all these years you have congratulated yourself on your foxiness in eluding me, little thinking that I have never given you a thought since I quitted Salem."

Jewell blew out a cloud of smoke and grinned sardonically at the postmaster. At that moment the door opened and two men entered the store. They wanted some smoking tobacco, and one of them asked if there was any mail for him. Mr. Scudder supplied their wants, and then, after looking over a small bunch of letters in the "M" box, said there was no mail for the person who had made the inquiry. The two villagers looked at Curtis Jewell and saw that he was a stranger. They noticed his fashionable clothes and aristocratic bearing, and they went out wondering who he was, and what he was doing in Roanoke.

They also observed that he seemed to own the store.

CHAPTER IV.—Tells Of The Bargain That Curtis Jewell Made With The Postmaster.

As soon of Jewell and the postmaster were alone again the visitor continued his story:

"When I presented myself before my worthy relative he looked me over in a critical way, and then asked me a lot of questions about my past and present, as well as my aspirations for the future. As my record wasn't the best in the world, which is no news to you, Silas, I naturally had to gild it with a thick coat of fiction. Fortunately, my uncle did not seem to consider it necessary to verify my statements with the assistance of a detective, but accepted me at my own valuation, which you may well believe was as high as I could make it.

"It is unnecerrary to go into further details, Silas. The old gentleman took a fancy to me, turned over the best suite of rooms in the mansion for my exclusive use, and after a certain lapse of time had his lawyer draw up a new will making me his sole heir and cutting his daughter off with a hundred dollars.

"A month ago he took to his bed. He lingered on till the other day, when he died. I saw to it that he was planted with all the respect and style which he was entitled by his wealth, and then——"

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Scudder, leaning forward in his eagerness, "you took possession of the old gentleman's property. Maybe he had an interest in the mill down here, and you came to Roanoke to look after——"

"Nothing of the sort," replied Jewell shortly. "I simply made the unwelcome discovery, imparted to me by my uncle's dried-up anatomy of a secretary, whom I never liked, that the old gentleman had made a new will just before he died, leaving all his wealth to his daughter, or, in the event of her death, her heirs, while to me he bequeathed only \$1,000, because some busybody, whom I suspect was the secretary, had informed him that I had been living the life of a high roller, and was therefore unworthy of further consideration."

"Then you've been turned out of your——"

"Say kicked out, Silas, for that is what it amounts to."

"What are you going to do now?"

"Try to get it back again."

"How can you? You can't get over the new will."

"I think I can—with your help," replied Jewell in a pointed tone.

"My help!" ejaculated Mr. Scudder in surprise. "How can I help you?"

"Listen and I will show you. My uncle's daughter, my cousin, married a man named Edward Bacon."

"Edward Bacon!" said the postmaster. "The name is familiar to me."

"I found out that Mrs. Bacon died about five years ago, leaving a daughter twelve years of age," said Jewell, paying no attention to Scudder's interruption. "This daughter, who is now about seventeen, is the heir, through her mother, by virtue of the will, to all my uncle's property. The old gentleman's secretary, after some trouble, succeeded in locating Mr. Bacon and his daughter in this village."

"This village! Ah!" ejaculated the postmaster, a light breaking in on his mind.

Exactly, and has written a letter to Mr. Bacon advising him about the old gentleman's death, and the fact that his daughter is the heir to a splendid property. Now, Silas, that letter must not reach Edward Bacon's hands. I depend on you to prevent it."

"How can I prevent him gettin' it?"

"Don't all letters have to pass through your hands before they reach those to whom they are addressed?"

Mr. Scudder nodded.

"Very well. What is simpler than for you to hold back this letter I mentioned? It will bear a Boston postmark and my uncle's monogram on the back. When you see this letter, instead of sending it to the mill, where your nephew told me that Edward Bacon works, hand it to me. Understand?"

"Oh, I say, Jewell, that won't do," faltered Mr. Scudder.

"Why won't it do?" demanded his visitor almost fiercely.

"Because tampering with the mails is a very serious thing."

"Oh, it is?" sneered Jewell. "Is it more serious than robbing an orphan of the money left him by his father? You have deliberately robbed Will Leggatt of——"

"Hush, hush!" cried the postmaster, seizing Jewell by the arm. "Someone might hear you, and my reputation——"

"Your reputation!" chuckled Jewell. "Now look here, Scudder, you must help me, or by the Lord Harry I'll tell that boy everything and show you up. This is a serious matter for me, and I won't stand any fooling. If that letter reaches Edward Bacon my hopes will vanish up Salt River. Stand by me and I'll stand by you. Mutual help it must be, or my ruin will mean yours as well. Is it a bargain or not?"

Jewell spoke with a fierceness that rattled Mr. Scudder.

"Yes, yes; it is a bargain. And you promise not to say a word to Will Leggatt?"

"I promise. I care nothing about your villainy as long as my own plans succeed."

"You can depend on me," replied the storekeeper. "But," he said, with sudden thought, "suppose the letter should be registered?"

"What of it?"

"I have to sign for all registered letters, and the paper goes back to the post-office sending the same out. I am held responsible for the delivery to the right person of those letters. I must either return those letters whence they came, or the cards accompanying them properly signed by the party to whom they are addressed. There is no alternative for me."

"Don't worry, Silas. If the letter is registered I'll sign the card as Edward Bacon, and you can return it in the usual way."

CHAPTER V.—How Will Leggatt Is Triumphant Acquired.

Next morning Will Leggatt sent word by Constable Jones' son to Foreman Stewart, head of the department in which he was employed, that he

had been arrested for whipping Squire Grant's son, Percy, the evening before, and would have to appear for examination that morning at the justice's office. The boy also carried a subpoena from the constable to Jessie Bacon, commanding her presence at the squire's office at ten o'clock sharp to testify in the case of Grant vs. Leggatt. Will breakfasted with Constable Jones and his family, and then the constable took him around to see Lawyer Blake, the squire's business rival. Mr. Blake heard Will's story, and when he learned that it could be corroborated by Jessie Bacon, he consented to defend the boy free gratis. The squire's office was crowded with curious and interested villagers when the constable led Will in by a side door, and placed a seat for him. Jessie was already there, while Percy Grant sat near his pompous-looking father. The squire immediately read the charge and asked Will if he was guilty or not guilty.

"Not guilty," replied Will promptly in a clear tone.

"Take the witness chair, Percy," said his father. "Hold the Bible in your hand. You swear that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?"

Percy kissed the book and told the story of his troubles in his own way, glossing over his own shortcomings and laying all the blame on Will. The squire asked his son some questions, which he answered glibly, and the boy was about to leave the chair when Lawyer Blake got up and said:

"One moment, young man. Your honor," he added, turning to the justice, "I appear in behalf of the defendant."

Squire Grant looked surprised, but nodded curtly. He and Lawyer Blake were not on the best of terms, and it was largely because the squire's son was involved in the case that Mr. Blake undertook to defend Will for nothing.

"Isn't it a fact, young man," he said sharply to Percy, "that before a blow was struck between you and the defendant you grossly insulted him by calling him a common loafer?"

"No, it isn't," replied Percy sulkily.

"You deny that you applied such a name to the defendant? Remember, you are under oath."

"I don't remember doing so," answered the dude with some reluctance.

"You don't remember. Well, isn't it a fact that before the defendant struck you with his fist you struck him across the face with your cane?"

Percy was silent.

"Answer me," demanded Lawyer Blake in a tone that startled the boy into an admission of the fact. "That's all. Is that the plaintiff's case, your honor?"

The squire nodded as his son left the witness chair.

"Miss Bacon, will you take the chair?" said Lawyer Blake.

Jessie did so, somewhat embarrassed by the battery of eyes focussed on her. She was sworn and then told the story of the trouble in front of the factory exactly as the reader knows it. Lawyer Blake asked her one or two questions, and the justice, who acted in behalf of his son, tried his best to shake her testimony, but did not succeed. Will was then called to the stand and told his own story down to the moment that he left Percy howling for "Murder!" in the street. The squire questioned him sharply about his second

attack on Percy and Will answered him clearly and without fear of the consequences.

"Your honor," said Lawyer Blake, "that is our case. I think we have fully shown to your honor's satisfaction that my client was really the aggrieved party, and that the plaintiff deserved the punishment he received. I therefore move the discharge of the defendant."

As it was to his interest, politically, not to offend the villagers, the squire reluctantly dismissed the complaint and discharged Will from the custody of the constable. As it was after eleven Will decided that it was unnecessary for him and Jessie to return to the mill until one o'clock, so he invited the girl to go to the store and have dinner with him when it was ready. When they reached the post-office there were several persons in the store, one or two making purchases, the others apparently killing time. Standing apart, with a bored air, Will recognized the dark-featured stranger he had met at the station the night before. He glanced at the boy, whom he knew at once, and then at Jessie, whose beauty made quite an impression on him.

"Did you notice that well-dressed stranger near the door, Jessie?" asked Will.

"Yes. I wondered who he was," she replied.

"He came on last night's train. I was talking to him at the station. He seems to know my uncle. The particular reason why I called your attention to him is because he asked me a number of questions about your father."

"About my father?"

Will nodded.

"It struck me that he came to the village to see your father."

"What made you think so?"

"Because in the first place he asked me if I knew a man named Edward Bacon, who had a daughter Jessie."

"He did?" exclaimed the girl in some astonishment. "I can't imagine who this person can be who seems to know us."

At that moment Mrs. Watts, who had been busy in the kitchen, came into the sitting-room, where Will and Jessie were talking, to set the table. She bowed to the girl and then said:

"Why, Will, where were you all night, and where did you have your breakfast this morning?"

"Didn't Mr. Scudder tell you that I was arrested last evening for the trouble I had with Percy Grant?"

"No," she replied in surprise. "He never said anything about it. I asked him at breakfast where you were, but he made no reply. So you were actually arrested?"

"I was, and had to appear before the squire this morning, that's why Jessie and I are here. Jessie testified on my behalf and helped to get me off. I'll tell you the particulars during dinner."

In the meantime, after Will and Jessie passed through the store, Curtis Jewell asked Mr. Scudder, as soon as he was at liberty, who the young lady with his nephew was.

"That is Jessie Bacon, Edward Bacon's daughter," answered the postmaster. "She is your second cousin, and the heiress to your uncle's property," with a chuckle.

"The deuce you say? She's a mighty pretty girl."

The thought immediately occurred to Jewell

that if his present plans went wrong it might be possible, in spite of the difference in their ages, for him to make up to the girl and marry her. The coveted letter, from his late uncle's secretary, addressed to Edward Bacon, had come in the morning's mail, and the postmaster had turned it over to him. He had read it, and was at first somewhat startled to learn that Caleb Jarley, the secretary, was coming to Roanoke with the will to hand it over to Mr. Bacon as the natural guardian of the young heiress. On second thoughts he perceived the mistake that the secretary, in his simplicity, was making. Jarley should have taken the will to the late Horace Goodwin's lawyer and turned it over to him to have probated in the proper court, which procedure would have completely blocked Curtis Jewell's little game.

Now Jewell saw his chance. He was on the ground, and with the help of Silas Scudder, who was completely under his thumb, he figured that he ought to be able to concoct some safe plan by which he would be able to get the will away from old Caleb Jarley before he met Edward Bacon. Once it was in his possession he would destroy it and then all he had to do was to produce the will his uncle had made nine years before, have it probated, and in due time take possession of Horace Goodwin's wealth. Jewell lost no time in taking Mr. Scudder into his confidence, but the postmaster did not take kindly to his new scheme.

"Well, you've got to help me out," said Jewell in a threatening tone. "If my plans fail through any fault of yours you know what will happen to you. You will have to cough up half that boy's inheritance, or I will tell him all about your crooked business, and then you will lose it all."

"Oh, Lord!" groaned Mr. Scudder. "You wouldn't do that, Jewell."

"Wouldn't I? I'd do it so quick that it would make your head swim if you balk in this matter. My situation is too desperate to stand on ceremony with you, Scudder. Half measures will not do with me. You stood in with me the moment you handed me Bacon's letter. By doing that you committed a felony, and if it was brought to the attention of the Post-office Department you'd have a nice time trying to square yourself."

"But you made me do it," faltered Scudder.

"That fact wouldn't excuse me. I have also made myself amenable to the United States law by opening a letter not addressed to me. So you see we're both in the same boat, and must sink or swim together."

Mr. Scudder realized the predicament he was in, and had no further objection to make to anything advanced by the man who had him where the hair was short.

CHAPTER VI.—In Which Will Meets a Second Stranger and Hears a Cry for Help.

Will and Jessie dined with Mrs. Watts, and then they returned to the factory together. The news that Will Leggatt had been arrested for giving Percy Grant a whipping the night before, and that Jessie had been summoned to the squire's office as a witness in the case, soon circulated all over the mill, and aroused the most intense interest. The girls said it was a shame, and some of the boys, particularly Joe Rylance, said that

if Will Leggatt was punished they'd take the first chance to make it hot for Percy Grant. Next day was Saturday, and the mill closed down at five o'clock instead of six.

As Mr. Bacon had to remain in the office to clean up some extra work, Will walked home with Jessie, who told him that the stranger had not yet called on her father. He left her at the door of the vine-clad cottage on the cliffs and started back for the village so as to have ample time to go for the night mail. He reached the station ten minutes before train time. Seated on a crate on the platform he noticed a bearded man, in a plain suit of clothes, with his soft hat pulled well down over his forehead, smoking a briar-root pipe. It struck him that there was something familiar about the stranger, as though he had seen him before, but he couldn't say what it was. Will dragged his bag to the end of the platform and squatted down on it. At length the whistle of the train sounded down the road and the locomotive came in sight.

The bearded man on the crate got up, put his pipe in his pocket and assumed an alert attitude. With a rush and a grinding of air-brakes the train came up to the station and stopped. Will tossed the bag to the mail clerk and received a duplicate. This he dragged to his wheel. A number of persons got off the train, several of whom started for the 'bus. Last to alight was a little wizened looking man of perhaps sixty. He had a small grip in his hand and he looked around him in a puzzled way.

"Young man," he said to Will, "where is the village of Roanoke?"

"About half a mile down the road, sir," replied the boy.

"Will I have to walk there?"

"No. That 'bus will take you to the Roanoke House, on Main Street."

"Thank you. You're connected with the post-office, I believe?"

"Yes."

"Then perhaps you could tell me whereabouts in the village Mr. Edward Bacon lives?"

"He doesn't live in the village, but about a mile outside on the cliffs," replied Will, surprised that a second stranger should interrogate him about Jessie's father.

"Thank you. I dare say I shall be able to find the place," said the old man, turning away and stepping into the 'bus.

He was followed by the bearded man who had sat on the crate. This person had approached close to the spot where Will and the old man carried on their brief conversation and listened to what they said without appearing to do so.

"I wonder what's in the wind in relation to Mr. Bacon?" thought Will as he rode toward the village on his wheel. "Here are two men who have been inquiring about him within two days. The first one is hanging around our store as though he had a whole lot of business with Mr. Scudder, with whom he appears to be on very friendly terms, and he hasn't gone near Mr. Bacon yet. Now a second person arrives who clearly intimates that he intends to call on the Bacons. I should like to know what it all means. Looks as if there was something important on the tapis. I hope it may not result in Jessie and her father leaving Roanoke. I wouldn't like that for a cent. I'd miss Jessie the worst way. She's the only

girl here I take any interest in. I would feel like a fish out of water if she and her father pulled up stakes and went somewhere else. I believe I'd light out myself and follow her."

There were a number of customers in the store when Will arrived with the mail. After putting his wheel up he pitched in to help Mr. Scudder, who had to look after the mail at once, as several people were on hand waiting for expected letters and newspapers. Half an hour later Will went in to supper. While he was eating a messenger came from the Roanoke House with a letter for Mr. Scudder, who seemed anxious and nervous after reading it. The factory hands held a dance on the last Saturday night of each month at the Town Hall, and Will invariably escorted Jessie there and afterward back to her home. This Saturday was the last one of the month, and so when Will finished his supper he started upstairs to put on his best clothes and fix himself up. While he was washing his face Mr. Scudder entered his room.

"You hain't goin' out, are you?" asked the storekeeper.

"Yes. I'm going to a dance at the hall," replied the boy.

"I'm goin' out on business, and I wanted you to look after the store," said Mr. Scudder crossly. "Can't you stay around till it's time to close up and then go to the dance?"

"I don't see how I can. I've got to go after Jessie Bacon. She'll expect me to show up not later than half-past seven."

"Humph! You're gal-struck I s'pose. Goin' by the road, ain't you?"

"What other way is there?"

"I didn't know but you might take the short cut along the cliffs," he said. "It's jest like boys to run into danger jest for the fun of the thing."

"I'm not looking for trouble," replied Will, wondering why his uncle had made such a pointed mention of the short cut which ran by way of Storm Stone Rock, the highest point of the cliffs.

"I should hope not. I hain't got no money to throw away on an undertaker."

"Wouldn't you bury me if something happened to me?" grinned Will.

"I s'pose I'd have to. That's why I don't want nothin' to happen to you, 'cause funerals are expensive."

"If you knew you were going out tonight why didn't you ask Billy Bray to come back after supper?"

Billy Bray was Mr. Scudder's assistant in the store.

"I didn't know I was goin' out till a little while ago."

"Well, as soon as I'm dressed I'll go over to Bray's house and send him to look after the store while you're away. He can close up if you're not back by half-past eight."

"Well, don't forget to do it. I'm goin' out in about ten minutes, and Mrs. Watts'll have to look after the store till Billy comes over."

Thus speaking the postmaster left Will's room and went to his own. In about ten minutes Will heard him go downstairs and out by the kitchen door. The young factory boy finished his toilet and entered the store, where he found Mrs. Watts waiting on a customer.

"I'm going after Billy Bray," said Will, "as I can't stay here myself."

When he reached Bray's home Billy was out somewhere, and Will lost twenty minutes hunting him up. Then he started for the Bacons' cottage.

"I'm dead late," he muttered. "I'll have to take the short cut, anyway, even if I run the risk of furnishing the undertaker with a job. However, this won't be the first time I've gone around by Storm Stone Rock, and I know every foot of the way as well by night as in the broad daylight."

So off he hustled by the path that ran close to the edge of the cliffs, the base of which was washed by the sleepless waters of the Atlantic Ocean. By the time Will had got half way he noticed by the thickening air that a fog was coming in. As he didn't want to be caught in the clammy mist he hurried his steps. As soon as he reached the base of the rock he knew that he would have to turn sharply to the left in order to avoid a deep precipitous gully that the storms of past ages had cut out of the cliff wall.

"I'll bet it will be quarter to eight by the time I reach the cottage," he said to himself. "Jessie will wonder what's keeping me, for I've always been on hand to the minute before."

He was close to the great rock now, and the air was growing more hazy every moment, while the roll call of the surf sounded both mournful and menacing. Suddenly out of the darkness and mist ahead came a gasping cry for help—twice repeated.

CHAPTER VII.—Describes What Happened on the Cliffs.

"Somebody's in trouble out here," breathed Will, not a little startled by the cry. "The cry came from the direction of the rift, and that's the most dangerous spot on these cliffs. I hope he hasn't fallen down there. If he has he'll be a subject for an inquest. I'll have to make my way there and see what's the matter."

He passed around the base of Storm Stone Rock that was now almost swallowed up by the fog, and then advanced more cautiously, for he could see only a few feet ahead, and not very distinctly at that.

"Hold him quiet, Silas," came a voice out of the mist that sounded familiar to his ear. "He squirms so I can't get the case from his pocket."

"I'm holdin' him the best I know how," came another voice that Will recognized with a thrill of surprise and mistrust as his uncle's.

"My gracious!" ejaculated Will. "What's going on here? That's Mr. Scudder's voice. There is some man with him, and they seem to be doing something to somebody. It can't be possible that my uncle is up to any crooked work, and yet—"

"Help!"

The cry, feebler than before, and in a choked voice, reached Will's ears again. Will was now satisfied that a crime was being committed, and he determined, at any risk, to prevent it. The fact that his uncle appeared to be one of the principals in the affair did not deter, but rather incited him to action. He pushed forward and almost stumbled over the legs of a man lying on the ground held down by two others.

"Here, what does this mean?" he demanded in as stern a tone as he could assume.

One of the men, it was the person with the familiar voice, started up with a startled ejacula-

tion. Something dropped from his hand and struck the rocks with a ringing sound, then went clattering down into the rift. He uttered an imprecation, while his companion, with a gasp of consternation, rose to his feet and rushed off into the darkness like a frightened fawn.

"I say what does this mean?" demanded Will. "What have you been doing to this man?"

The boy and the man he addressed stood facing each other in the thick mist across the body of the unconscious victim.

"What's that to you?" snarled the man with the familiar voice doggedly.

"It's a great deal to me. This man's cry for help brought me up. Have you murdered him?"

"No, we haven't; but I'll murder you if I hear of you breathing a word of what you've seen to-night. I know you now, young man, so you won't be able to escape me."

"You scoundrel!" cried Will, taking a match from his pocket. "I'll know you, too."

With a swift movement he lit the match. As it flared up he thrust his arm forward and the blaze illuminated the stranger from head to foot for an instant and then went out. His action had been so sudden that he achieved his object before either could raise a finger to prevent him. Will recognized the man as the stranger he had seen sitting on the crate at the station that evening.

"Blame you!" cried the fellow fiercely. "You shall suffer for that."

He reached forward and caught Will by the arms. In another moment they were locked together in a tight embrace and were struggling for the mastery on the very edge of the perilous rift. Strong as the boy was he was no match for the man he was opposed to. The struggle was short, being brought to a speedy termination by Will tripping over a stone and going down heavily on the rocks with the man on top of him. The shock deprived him of consciousness, and he lay still as the person in whose behalf he had interfered. The man rose to his knees and waited for the boy to make a move, but he didn't.

"He's down and out for a while. Struck his head against a stone, I guess. Well, what shall I do now? That cowardly Scudder has made off and left me to face the consequences. The case containing the will has gone down into the rift—maybe to the bottom, where the seething waters will hide it from sight. If so I'm safe—the old man's property will be mine in spite of all the lawyers in the world. But I must make sure that it's gone for good, for I can't afford to take any chances. I can't investigate tonight in the fog and darkness, but I'll come around tomorrow and have a look. Now what shall I do with old Jarley, and this young imp who butted in on us so inopportunistically? I can't leave them here, for they might fall into the rift when they come to, and I don't want blood upon my soul. Well, I can drag them to the rock yonder and leave them. Their future movements will then be on their own heads. That blamed young monkey worked that match on me quite cleverly. But with the disguise I assumed he never will be able to identify me as the man he spoke to at the station two nights ago. No, no; I'm safe enough on that score. I've played a risky game, but I fancy it is as good as won. If the case is at the foot of the rift it is won, and nothing will stand between me and luxury for the rest of my life. As for Scud-

der, the cowardly old villain, I've a great mind to put a spoke in his wheel. Maybe I will before I'm done with him."

Curtis Jewell, for the reader will readily recognize that the rascal was he, got up and dragged the body of Saleb Jarley to the foot of Storm Stone Rock, now lost in the fog. Then he carried Will Leggatt from the edge of the rift and laid him beside the old secretary.

"Now good-night, my bucks, and may you find your way safely out of this when you come to your senses. By that time I expect to be enjoying a quiet cigar in my room, and dreaming of the good fortune that awaits me in Boston."

With those words he turned on his heel, and with great caution took his way over the rocks toward the village. He hadn't gone very far before Will moved and presently sat up.

"Gee! I got a good bump on my head that time. The rascal is gone, I see. Took advantage of my knockout to skip. Never mind, I'll know him when I see him again—if I ever do. As for Mr. Scudder, his presence here tonight, as the associate of that rascal in the commission of a crime—robbery, no doubt—is the greatest surprise of my life. I simply can't understand it. And he's my uncle. For that reason I suppose I'll have to keep mum and not let on that I recognized him. It won't be an easy matter for me to treat him as I've been accustomed to, for he'll never be the same person to me after tonight. Now I must look after the man whose cry for help brought me on the spot. Here he is alongside of me. He's moving, so he is doubtless coming to his senses. That's lucky, for it would be far from an easy job for me to have to carry him to the cottage, where Jessie must be in a terrible stew over my failure to show up."

Will raised the old secretary into a sitting posture and then struck a match to see if he could tell how badly injured he was. As the match flared up and cast its flickering glow on Caleb Jarley's face Will uttered an exclamation of surprise. He recognized the elderly stranger who had interrogated him at the station that evening about Edward Bacon. Will shook him.

"How do you feel?" he asked.

"Feel!" replied the old man. "I'm cold—very cold."

"Then get up and we'll walk along," said Will, assisting him on his feet.

The boy hooked his arm in the old man's and led him forward.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"My name? Yes, yes, I have a name, but I don't seem able to remember it."

"You don't remember it!" exclaimed Will in astonishment.

"No, everything seems to be in a haze. Did I get hurt? My head feels sore."

"Yes. You remember, I suppose, that you were attacked out here on the rocks, and——"

"Rocks! Rocks!" said the old man in a helpless tone. "What rocks?"

"You were knocked down by two men, one of whom was robbing you when I came up. You recollect that, of course," said Will.

"I don't know what you mean. My head seems all wrong. It hurts me."

Will wondered at the strangeness of the old man's replies. He seemed to be unable to collect his thoughts.

"You came here from Boston, didn't you?" asked Will.

"Boston!" repeated Caleb Jarley, as if the word struck a responsive chord. "Yes, yes; I know Boston. I know Boston. I——" and he rambled off into senseless mutterings.

"You came down here to Roanoke to see Edward Bacon," said Will.

"Yes, yes; Edward Bacon, Roanoke; brought will; it's in tin box; must be careful; if lost Curtis Jewell gets everything, then make ducks and drakes with it; never do—never do."

Will wondered what he was talking about. It struck the boy that the rough treatment the old man had received from the men who assaulted him had deranged his wits. At any rate, his talk was very irrational and unintelligible. The Bacon cottage, with lights shining from two of its windows, loomed up ahead. Will asked the old man no further questions, for he found that he could not get satisfactory answers, but led him forward. The poor old fellow went along as submissively as a child, mumbling to himself all the while. At length they reached the front door of the cottage, at which Will knocked loudly. It was opened by Jessie, who was dressed in her best gown, and looked uncommonly sweet.

"Why, Will, how late you are!" she exclaimed.

Then her eyes filled with surprise as she noticed the boy's elderly companion.

"Sorry, Jessie, but I had a strenuous adventure on the cliffs. Where is your father? I am going to bring this old gentleman in. He's badly hurt, I'm afraid."

"Father's in the sitting-room. You can go right in."

She held the door open while Will assisted Caleb Jarley into the entry, then she followed them into the sitting-room. Mr. Bacon looked up from the newspaper he was reading, said "Good-evening" to Will and looked inquiringly at the elderly stranger. Will led the secretary to the sofa, where he sat down and stared around the small room like one in a dream.

CHAPTER VIII.—What Caleb Jarley Said.

"Mr. Bacon, will you please see what you can do for this old gentleman?" said Will. "He was attacked by two men on the cliffs near Storm Stone Rock, and I guess he's badly injured. I came up and tried to save him, but got knocked out myself."

"Oh, Will! Are you hurt, too?" asked Jessie, noticing the boy's ruffled and somewhat soiled clothes, and coming forward anxiously.

"No; I'm all right. Don't worry about me. This old man here needs our services," replied Will.

Mr. Bacon asked for no further explanation, but hastened to aid the stranger. He saw there was a big cut on his head where the blood had partially congealed.

"Call your aunt, Jessie. Tell her to bring some warm water, Castile soap and a soft rag or two. Then go to one of the small drawers in my bureau and fetch a piece of court-plaster you will find there. Bring your scissors also," said Mr. Bacon.

Jessie flew to do her father's bidding, and pres-

ently her aunt entered the sitting-room with the water, soap and rags, also a bottle of liniment. Caleb Jarley offered no resistance to the good offices of the bookkeeper, who proceeded to bathe the wound and then cut some of the hair away from it. It was a deep and nasty-looking cut, and appeared to have been inflicted by the sharp edge of a stone. Mr. Bacon washed it with the liniment and then placed upon it a soft rag soaked with the same stuff, after which he bound the whole up with a bandage. Will brushed the secretary's clothes as well as he could with a whisk broom, then a pillow was placed for the old man's head, and he was made as comfortable as possible.

He lay a while with closed eyes, and Will took the opportunity to tell all that had happened as far as he knew under the shadow of Storm Stone Rock. He took care not to breathe a hint that would connect Silas Scudder with the affair, but said he would know the chief rascal anywhere if he came across him. After a time Caleb Jarley opened his eyes and began talking and muttering in the same strange way that Will had noticed during the walk to the cottage.

"He seems to be off his perch," said Will. "That's the way he went on all the way from the cliffs. I asked him several questions, but he couldn't give a sensible answer to one. I am pretty sure that he came down here from Boston, and further that he came to Roanoke to see you, Mr. Bacon."

"To see me!" ejaculated the bookkeeper in surprise.

"Yes, I am positive of that. I met him at the station when he got off the train tonight. He asked me where you lived, and when I told him he said he guessed he would be able to find the cottage."

"Why, I never saw the man in my life," replied Mr. Bacon. "I wonder what he wants with me?"

"I couldn't say, but on the way over here from the cliffs I heard him mumbling something about a tin box that he had to be careful of, for if it was lost somebody named Curtis Jewell would get everything."

"Curtis Jewell!" exclaimed Mr. Bacon in astonishment. "Why, that is the name of my dead wife's cousin. He took my wife's place in—"

Mr. Bacon recollected himself and stopped suddenly. No one in that neighborhood but himself, his sister and Jessie knew the facts connected with the bookkeeper's marriage with the Boston heiress who in consequence was disowned by her father, and her place in his home filled by his nephew, Curtis Jewell. It was naturally a painful recollection for Mr. Bacon, who revered the memory of the woman who made such a great sacrifice for his sake.

"Then you know this Curtis Jewell?" said Will.

"Not personally, but I've heard of him," replied the bookkeeper in a constrained tone.

"This old man's visit here has evidently some connection with him, I judged from his rambling talk," said Will.

"Did this old gentleman tell you who he was?"

"No," replied the boy, shaking his head. "I asked him his name coming over here, but he couldn't remember it."

"Couldn't remember his name?" ejaculated Mr. Bacon.

"He doesn't seem able to recall anything except

your name, Roanoke, Curtis Jewell, Boston, and the fact that he has a tin box in his possession that he must be careful of. He also said something about a will, I think."

"A will!" exclaimed the bookkeeper in a puzzled way.

Will nodded.

"Strange," said Mr. Bacon. "It can't be that—no, no, it isn't reasonable to suppose that Horace Goodwin—"

As the name passed his lips Caleb Jarley struggled up.

"Yes, yes, Horace Goodwin repented and did the right thing at last—at last," he cried in a trembling but earnest tone, looking vacantly at those present. "Poor child—poor child! How she must have suffered! And she is dead—dead. If she had only lived to know that her father repented and yearned to see her again. If she had only lived—poor child! Poor child!"

Then the secretary seemed to forget what he was talking about, and recommenced his rambling talk and mutterings. Mr. Bacon stared with a pale face at the old man.

Every word Caleb Jarley had uttered was intelligible to him. Horace Goodwin was his wife's father, and from the old man's talk it appeared that he had repented of his treatment of his only child too late to receive her back in his arms. But what did the old man mean by saying that Horace Goodwin had done the right thing at last? Was his father-in-law dead, and had he added a codicil to his will leaving some of his property to his daughter or her heirs? The probability of such a thing thrilled him through and through as he thought of Jessie, who was compelled to labor ten hours a day in the knitting factory to help keep the pot boiling at home.

"You say he mentioned a tin box?" he said, turning abruptly to Will.

"Yes."

"And I think you said something about a will," added the bookkeeper with a strange eagerness in his tone.

"I am not positive on that point, Mr. Bacon," replied the boy. "I am almost sure, though, that I heard him mention the word."

"You say he mentioned my name at the station, and said he was going to call on me?"

"That's right."

"Did he say anything else? Did he speak about Jessie?"

"No, not a word."

"What could have taken him out on the cliffs? If he was coming to see me tonight he would naturally have inquired the way, and anybody would have directed him to take the road."

"That is what puzzles me," said Will. "Looks as if those two men met him somewhere near or in the village, saw he was a stranger around here, and then after finding out where he was going offered to act as guides, and led him out along the cliff path with the object of robbing him."

"That must be the fact," replied Mr. Bacon. "Well, the question is, did they succeed in robbing him?"

"I'm afraid one of them did. He could easily have completed his work after he laid me out. The other man ran away the moment I appeared."

"Too bad; too bad," said the bookkeeper in an anxious tone. "The fellow may have taken the tin box from him."

"Now that you mention it, I am sure he had the box in his hand when I came up."

"He did?"

"Yes, but he must have dropped it, for I heard something rattle on the rocks as if it had fallen into the rift."

"If it went down into the rift it is gone forever."

"It may not have gone far, but lodged on a rocky shelf, in which case it could be recovered with the help of a rope."

"Well, you're not really sure that it was the case you heard. It might have been a knife that the rascal had been using to intimidate his victim. The blade striking on the rocks would have made a rattling sound," said Mr. Bacon.

"That's true," agreed Will.

"We'd better get the old man to bed up in our spare room," said the bookkeeper. "After that I think it would be well if you went for Doctor Ball and brought him out here. It must be that a splinter of bone is pressing on the man's brain. Certainly no ordinary wound would make him act the way he does. His memory seems completely befogged. From what has already transpired I suspect that the errand which brought him here from Boston is one of great importance to me and mine. We cannot know, however, unless we are able to learn the facts from his lips. Therefore the sooner a doctor is called in to treat him the better."

"All right, sir; I'll go for Doctor Ball after I help you put the man to bed," said Will.

Caleb Jarley offered no objection when he was told he must go to bed. Will took him by one arm and Mr. Bacon by the other, and led him up to the spare room which Jessie's aunt had prepared for his reception. They undressed and put him to bed, and while the bookkeeper remained with him Will started to go for the doctor.

"No dance for us tonight, Jessie," he said to the girl when she accompanied him to the door.

"No, I suppose not," she answered with a rueful little smile. "You'll come back with Doctor Ball, won't you?"

"Sure, I will," he said, and then he went out into the night.

CHAPTER IX.—Concerning the Interview Between Will and Curtis Jewell on the Cliffs.

Will found Doctor Ball at home, told him the facts about the old man, and accompanied him to the Bacon cottage. Caleb Jarley was lying with his eyes open, wide awake, but there was a vacant stare in them which indicated an impairment of his mental faculties.

"He hasn't said a word since you left, Will," said the bookkeeper.

Doctor Ball lost no time in examining the wound, which he pronounced a very serious one, but he could find no sign that a splinter of bone was pressing on the brain.

"It is very possible that he is suffering from a concussion of the brain," he said. "Although the wound is a severe one there is nothing about it that leads me to suppose that it is the cause of his present mental condition. Any idea how long he was unconscious?" he asked Will.

"I couldn't say exactly, but I don't think it was over half an hour."

"And he has been irrational ever since he came to his senses?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, the case, I'm bound to admit, puzzles me a little. He may recover his mental faculties at any moment, or it may be some time before he comes around."

"Any danger of his dying, doctor?" asked Mr. Bacon anxiously.

"No, I don't think there is, though his age is against him. He seems to have an unusual amount of vitality for a man of his years, and ought to pull out all right. He will have to be looked after, and should be kept in bed for the present. I will come out and see him in the morning."

Doctor Ball then took his leave. Mr. Bacon remained with Caleb Jarley and Will went downstairs to talk with Jessie. Their conversation at first related to the patient upstairs.

"Your father told me that he examined the old man's clothes and found all his property apparently intact. He had on his person a pocketbook containing nearly fifty dollars, an old-fashioned but valuable watch, a pair of heavy gold sleeve buttons, and various other articles of minor value. All these things could easily have been taken from him by the two ruffians had their real object been plunder. The tin case that he was supposed to have is missing, however, so it is impossible to say whether he really had such an article about him. If he did have it, the chief ruffian carried it away, or it fell into the rift. It might have been the case and not a knife I heard rattling on the rocks."

On his way home that night Will could think of nothing else but the strange adventure on the cliffs. He was sorely puzzled to account for his uncle being involved in such a criminal act. Neither could he understand how Mr. Scudder came to be hand-in-glove with a man who was clearly a stranger in that locality. Will was willing to swear that he had never met the man before that night, when he saw him perched on the crate at the station apparently waiting for someone. And yet, for all that, there was something familiar about him, and, above all, his voice was one he was sure he had heard before. Who was he waiting for at the station? Could it be that he was looking for the old man?

"By George!" ejaculated Will. "I'm beginning to think there is a deep mystery in this matter. Maybe that fellow knew all about the poor old man's errand down here and came on an earlier train to head him off. Maybe his sole object was to secure that tin box which seems to figure in the case. I recollect now that he followed the old man into the 'bus and sat beside him. Later on the old gentleman either started out to visit Mr. Bacon, or he was decoyed from the hotel to the cliffs. My reasoning may be all right in its way, but it fails to throw any light on the very important circumstance of Mr. Scudder being mixed up in the affair. As long as I can recollect my uncle has never before shown a crooked streak. He is close-fisted, and whenever I have asked him questions about my father he has shut me up short and sweet, but otherwise I can't find any fault with him. Of course he recognized me when I came on the scene tonight, and this probably accounts for him skipping off so quickly, leaving his companion and me to fight it out between our-

selves." He's bound to show a certain amount of nervousness when we meet tomorrow, for he isn't sure that I didn't recognize him even in the fog. However, I don't mean to let him know, for the present, at any rate, that I'm on to him. I must put Constable Jones wise to the other man. We'll go to Squire Grant's house together and get a warrant for his arrest. If he doesn't leave by the morning train there is a chance that the constable may catch him. After I have attended to that matter I'll go over to the rift and see if there is any sign there of the tin case. Mr. Bacon seems much interested in it. At any rate, it strikes me that it is at the bottom of the whole trouble."

By the time Will had reached this point of his soliloquy he was within a few yards of the store. He had a key to the back door, and letting himself in, he pulled off his shoes and went quietly to his room. He slept soundly until Mrs. Watts called him to breakfast. Mr. Scudder did not put in an appearance at the meal, and as soon as Will got through he went over to Constable Jones' house. He told the constable all the particulars of the affair on the cliffs, without implicating his uncle, and the officer agreed that a warrant ought to be issued for the unknown rascal.

Accordingly they went to the justice's house, where Will repeated his narrative, and Squire Grant issued the document empowering the constable to arrest the man on sight and put him in the lock-up. It was close on to eleven o'clock when Will took the cliff path for the rift. When Will rounded Storm Stone Rock and came in sight of the rift, a dozen yards away, he was surprised to see a tall, well-dressed man on the scene, peering down into the chasm. He recognized him at once as the stranger who had talked to him at the station, and who seemed to be on familiar terms with his uncle. The man had now been three days in Roanoke, and Will wondered what business had brought him there. He had certainly not called on Mr. Bacon, though his pertinent inquiries about the bookkeeper had given the boy the idea that he had business with Jessie's father. The reader, however, knows that this man was Curtis Jewell. The sound of Will's footsteps attracted Jewell's attention and he looked around.

"Ah, my young friend," he said with a sinister smile, "we meet again."

Like a flash Will recognized his voice as identical with the tones of the man connected with last night's adventure, and he looked at him sharply. He knew now why the rascal's voice had seemed familiar to him.

"I see we do," he replied rather coldly to Jewell's remark.

"Are you out for a morning's walk along the cliffs?" asked the man curiously.

"You seem to be taking in the cliffs yourself," replied Will. "Have you called on Mr. Bacon yet?"

"Why do you ask that?" said Jewell sharply.

"Because you made so many inquiries about him at the station the evening you reached here that I supposed you had business with him."

"You needn't worry about my business relations with Mr. Bacon."

"I'm not worrying about the matter," replied Will indifferently.

At the same time he was covertly sizing this

man up, for a suspicion had entered his head that this elegant-looking person and the rough-looking man of the previous night might possibly be the same individual. The suspicion gained strength every moment from the fact that the two were of the same height and build, and this man was on familiar terms with Mr. Scudder.

"I hope you'll know me when you see me again," said Jewell sarcastically.

"I guess I will," replied Will with a slight laugh. "By the way, have you known Mr. Scudder long?"

"What is that to you, young man?"

"Nothing."

"Then why did you ask?"

"Merely out of curiosity."

"May I ask how long have you known Mr. Scudder yourself?" Jewell asked with a sardonic look.

"Ever since I can remember—almost."

"Has he treated you well?"

"I haven't any particular fault to find with him."

"Have you ever asked him about your father?"

"Does that fact interest you?"

"Nothing to speak of; but I should think it would interest you," he said with some emphasis.

"Why did you ask me that question? Don't you suppose my uncle would tell me anything he knew about my father?"

"Did you ever read the story of the Babes in the Wood?" chuckled Jewell.

"I can't say that I have."

"Then I advise you to read it and ponder over it."

"Why?"

"The babes had an uncle, and so have you."

"What of it?"

"There's a whole lot about it if you can only grasp the point."

"I'd like to know what you are trying to get at."

"They say a nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse. Well, you're the blind horse, and I'm giving you a nod, or a wink, or—a hint, if you can understand that better. Follow it up and see what you can make out of it; but before you begin, read about the babes and their foxy old uncle, and after you've read the story think it over. There's been more than one foxy old uncle in this world, and more than one babe who got left in the shuffle. Just mark that fact down in big letters and put it in your hat, Will Leggatt."

With an irritating laugh, Curtis Jewell turned on his heel and walked away, leaving Will greatly mystified by his concluding words.

CHAPTER X.—How Jessie Gives Will Food for Thought.

"I wonder what he was aiming at?" muttered Will, following the aristocratic figure of Curtis Jewell with his eyes till he vanished around Storm Stone Rock. "He put a whole lot of stress on the word uncle. He said there was more than one foxy old uncle in the world, and more than one babe that got left in the shuffle. It strikes me that he was hitting at Mr. Scudder. Well, after last night's experience with my uncle I'm willing to believe that he is uncommonly foxy. If this chap imagines that I am one of the babes that is

going to get left in the shuffle, all I can say is that his opinion doesn't cut much ice with me. I'm not going to get left in this world if I can help myself—not as long as I've got health and strength to hustle."

"Hello, Will!" A girlish voice came floating through the air toward him. He easily recognized the tones as Jessie's. Turning, he saw her coming toward him from the direction of her home. He waved his arm and waited for her to come up.

"How is the old gentleman this morning?" he asked.

"About the same. He is as submissive as a child, and acts like one. He looks wonderingly around, as if he couldn't understand the condition of things, but he does not say anything, or make the slightest complaint. My father thinks that he came down here on a very important mission to——"

She stopped abruptly and looked a little bit confused. Will saw that she had some reason for not wishing to finish what she started to say, so in order to put her at her ease he abruptly changed the subject.

"Did you ever read the story of the Babes in the Wood, Jessie?" he asked.

"Why, of course, I did, when I was a little girl."

"Do you remember anything about it?"

"I remember that I was very much interested in the fate of the two babes."

"What happened to them?"

"They got lost in a deep, dark wood, then they fell asleep in each other's arms and died, and the birds came and covered them with leaves."

"The birds did?" grinned Will.

"So the story stated. It was a very sad little story, and I remember that I cried over it."

"Did they have a foxy old uncle?"

"Did they? They had a villainous old uncle. He wanted their property."

"What property?"

"The property left them by their father."

"Did he get it?"

"I guess he did. He hired two rascals to take the babes into the wood and kill them. The men quarreled and came to blows, and while they were at it the babes wandered away and got lost."

"Is that the whole story?"

"Yes." Will scratched his head and wondered where the point was that Curtis Jewell suggested that he should think over. The man's remarks struck him as so odd that he thought he'd repeat them to Jessie. So he told the girl that when he came over there to take a look down into the rift to see if the tin box was anywhere in sight he found the well-dressed stranger there who had inquired about her father of him at the station.

"He was looking down the rift, too, when I came up. As soon as he heard me he turned around and spoke to me. I told you last night that the voice of one of the men who attacked the old man had a familiar ring. I couldn't recall where I had heard it before. Well, I know now. The well-dressed stranger has the same voice."

"Do you suspect then that he——"

"Well, between you and I, I have a suspicion that there is a connection between the two men.

They agree in height and build also. If last night's ruffian was really the well-dressed stranger, his disguise was first-class. I never could identify him under oath."

"You must tell father about this. He may be able to suggest some way of finding out the truth."

"I will. Now I want to tell you about the conversation this man and I had just before you showed up. He's only been gone about fifteen minutes." Will repeated, as near as he could remember, what Curtis Jewell said to him with reference to his uncle, Silas Scudder, dwelling particularly on the man's ambiguous allusion to the foxy old uncle of the Babes in the Wood.

"He advised me to read the story and ponder over it. He said there was more than one foxy old uncle in the world, and more than one babe who got left in the shuffle, and advised me to put the fact in big letters in my hat. He also said that a nod was as good as a wink to a blind horse. That I was the blind horse, and he was giving me a wink or a hint. Now what do you suppose he was getting at? Trying to make me think that my uncle was playing me for a fool?"

"That is what it looks like," answered Jessie.

"But my uncle isn't playing me for a fool," said Will in a positive tone. "He may be getting a certain amount of service from me for which he doesn't pay, but that isn't anything, seeing that he raised me from a little boy ever since my father went West and died out there. Only for Mr. Scudder, I probably would have been sent to a poor farm as a friendless little orphan."

"Then your father was poor when he left you in Mr. Scudder's charge?" said Jessie.

"I suppose he must have been."

"You only suppose? Why, Will, haven't you spoken to Mr. Scudder about your father?"

"I have tried to, but he never seemed to want to go into the details I asked him for."

"Why not?"

"He was averse to speaking about my father. I have an idea they didn't pull well together."

"What did you learn from him?"

"That my father, after meeting with financial reverses, went out West somewhere to see if he could make a fortune, leaving me in his care. That after an absence of a couple of years my father was stricken with a fever among the mountains and died."

"Is that all Mr. Scudder could tell you?"

"That's all he did tell me."

"When Mr. Scudder heard of the death of your father surely he must have written to the place where he died to find out the particulars, and whether he left any money or other property, which it naturally was his duty to take charge of in your interest."

"If he did he never told me anything about it."

"Did you ever ask for the facts of your father's death, and whether he left any property after him?"

"I have. All I could get out of Mr. Scudder was that my father died of a mountain fever, and that he didn't leave anything at all."

"If he told you that I suppose it must be so. Do you know where your father died?"

"Somewhere in Colorado."

"Didn't Mr. Scudder tell you the place?"

"He told me that he couldn't remember. It was out in the mountains."

"You have lived with Mr. Scudder nearly all your life. Have you ever seen this man before?"

"Never to my knowledge."

"Then he must have known your uncle many years ago."

"It looks that way," admitted Will.

"Did you ask Mr. Scudder who he was?"

"I did. All he would tell me was that he was a gentleman from Boston who was looking over the neighborhood with the view of establishing a factory here."

"It is very singular how he knows my father's name, unless he met somebody in Boston from here who told him. It may have been his original intention to talk to my father on the subject of the factory and then changed his mind."

"That's true. However, I should think he would spend his time making inquiries of the factory superintendents and others well informed on that subject than to be hanging around the store. Mrs. Watts told me that he has spent the better part of the two days he's been in the village at the store in conversation with Mr. Scudder. She made the singular remark that my uncle seems to be afraid of him."

"Afraid of him!" ejaculated Jessie in surprise. "Why should he be?"

"Ask me something easier, Jessie, and maybe I'll be able to answer you," laughed Will.

"It is funny he should ask you if Mr. Scudder treated you well, and if you had ever asked your uncle about your father. How did he say it?"

"In a rather pointed way. When I asked him if he didn't suppose Mr. Scudder would tell me all he knew he sprung his remark about the Babes in the Wood on me, advising me to read the story and ponder over it because the babes had an uncle and so had I."

"He knows something about your uncle that's hidden from you." Will looked at Jessie in a blank kind of a way.

"He told you to ponder over the story of the babes," she added.

"Yes. He said there was a whole lot about it if I could only grasp the point."

"The point of the story is that the father of the babes left them a lot of property, and the wicked uncle conspired to defraud them out of it. This man clearly insinuated that your father left you money or other property and that your uncle has treated you like the babes were treated by their uncle."

"Great Scott, Jessie!" gasped Will. "Do you really think that is what he meant?"

"That is certainly what his words suggest."

"But if my father really left me anything why should Mr. Scudder conceal the fact? It wouldn't be a fair deal to me."

"Of course, it wouldn't, but there are persons in this world who will stop at nothing to make money. When they are found out you read about their rascality in the newspapers. When they are not found out their victims suffer the fate of the Babes in the Wood—that is, they never learn the truth, and the wicked prosper."

"But Mr. Scudder claims to be worth very little. If my father had left quite a sum of

money, and my uncle had kept it, he wouldn't need to run a country store and wear cheap clothes. I should think he would have gone to the city long ago and lived on his ill-gotten gains."

"Mr. Scudder doesn't look to me like a man who enjoys spending money. My father says that he must make a good profit out of the store, not to speak of his salary as postmaster. It is common gossip in the village that your uncle spends as little as possible, and hoards up the rest. The general impression is that he's a miser. If your father left you any money, and he got possession of it, you may depend that he is holding on to it just for the satisfaction it gives him to know that he has it, and not because he has any idea of ever spending it on himself."

Will made no reply. His mind was grappling with a new train of thought which Jessie's explanation of the motif of the Babes in the Wood had started in his brain. He could hardly bring himself to believe that there could be really anything in it, but he couldn't get away from the significant hints thrown out by the well-dressed stranger, whose manner indicated that he could throw a whole lot of light on the subject if he chose to do so.

CHAPTER XI.—In Which Will Heads Off a Serious Panic.

"Have you looked into the rift after the tin case?" asked Jessie.

"No," replied Will, coming out of his brown study; "but I'll do so now. We'll take a look together." They approached the edge of the chasm and peered down into the rocky depths. The sea ebbed and flowed at the bottom, sixty-odd feet below.

Rocks jutted out like shelves here and there part of the way down, and it was upon one of these projections that Will thought the tin case might have rested it if it had really fallen into the rift.

He and Jessie looked everywhere, but the tin box was not to be seen.

"No use looking further," said Will. "Whatever it was I heard fall it went to the bottom and is covered by the water, and that's the end of it, I'm afraid."

"Until the poor old gentleman recovers control of his brain we shall never know whether he had a tin box or not," replied Jessie.

"That's about the size of it. Shall we walk along the cliffs for a while?"

Jessie consented, and they spent an hour in happy companionship.

Then he escorted her to the cottage, politely declined an invitation to stay to dinner, and walked back to the store by way of the road.

When he reached home Mrs. Watts was preparing the midday meal.

"Where is my uncle?" Will asked her.

"In the store," replied the housekeeper.

Will glanced into the big room, which was closed, and saw Mr. Scudder seated at the tall desk behind the post-office pigeon-holes going over his accounts.

"I'd give something to know whether my uncle

is an old villain or not," muttered the boy as he stood watching the postmaster at the other end of the store. "His actions last night are certainly very much against him. The attack on that poor old man was an outrage that calls for justice, but I don't feel that I ought to be the one to expose my uncle. I'll call on Mr. Jones after dinner and tell him my suspicions about the well-dressed stranger. And that reminds me I can find out his name by calling at the Roanoke House, where he is stopping. His signature will be on the register. It's a wonder I never thought of that before. I'll go there before I visit the constable."

Will went upstairs to his room.

"I'm going to tackle Mr. Scudder about my father in a few days, and this time I don't intend to let him wriggle out without giving me some satisfaction. If my uncle has worked any crooked business on me I'm going to find it out if I can. If he won't come up with the facts I'll consult Mr. Bacon about writing to the various mining districts of Colorado on the chance of learning what I have a right to know. The great difficulty I am up against is the lapse of time since my father's death. It will doubtless be hard to learn about matters that happened twelve years ago out in the wilds. However, I won't give up the ship as long as a plank is left to hold on to. I'm no babe in the wood even if Mr. Scudder is a rascally old uncle, bet your boots."

After dinner Will walked over to the hotel and consulted the register.

The well-dressed stranger arrived Thursday evening, and his name was the last one on a short list.

Curtis Jewell, however, had not registered under his right name, but had put down "William Brown, Boston," instead.

"So his name is William Brown," said Will to himself. "I can easily remember that. By the way, the old gentleman must be registered here, too. I'll see what his name is."

Will consulted the register for the previous day and read the name "Caleb Jarley, Boston."

From the Roanoke House the young factory boy walked over to the constable's home.

Mr. Jones was not at home, but with one of his associates was out scouring the neighborhood for the man who answered to the description furnished by Will.

As Mrs. Jones had no idea when her husband would return, Will sat down and wrote a note to the constable telling of his suspicions about the man registered at the Roanoke House as William Brown.

He then went to Sunday-school, arriving late, and when that was over he went home with Jessie and had tea with the family.

He informed Mr. Bacon that the name of the old gentleman was Caleb Jarley, and that he came from Boston.

Physically speaking, the old man was much improved, but his mind was still clouded.

Next morning Will reported at the factory at a quarter before seven, and took his place as time-keeper at the gate.

Nobody was late that morning, much to Will's satisfaction, for he hated to be obliged to report any of his late associates.

Mr. Bacon reached the office at eight o'clock

and he started the new office assistant at some routine desk work.

Will was naturally a bright lad, and it did not take him long to get accustomed to his new duties.

He acquitted himself that day to the satisfaction of the bookkeeper, and gave promise of becoming a much better all-around clerk than Harry Harper, whom he had succeeded.

He was through at half-past five, but he stayed around the building until the six o'clock whistle released the operatives, as he wanted to say a few words to Jessie and go home with Joe Rylance.

When he reached the store he found a note there addressed to him.

It was from the constable.

The officer said that he had not received Will's note until that (Monday) morning.

Thinking that there might be something in the boy's suspicions about "William Brown" he had gone to the hotel to try and get a line on that person.

He learned from the clerk that the said "Brown" had left the village the night before by the night train for Boston.

He also said that he and one of the under constables had been looking for the man for whom the warrant had been taken out, but without the least success, and it was his opinion that the rascal had left the neighborhood.

That was equivalent to saying that he had abandoned the quest.

From Mrs. Watts Will learned that Mr. Scudder had admitted the well-dressed stranger to the store the evening previous, and that the two talked for more than an hour together, after which the man took his departure and she had not seen him since.

Will noticed that his uncle seemed nervous and constrained when he handed over the mail-bag for him to carry to the station as usual.

"His guilty conscience is working on him," thought the boy as he mounted his wheel and rode off.

Time went faster and more pleasant with Will in the office than when he worked in the operating room on the third floor.

His new work was more congenial to him, and he tried to do the very best he was capable of.

On Thursday morning Joe Rylance overslept himself and was late.

He found himself shut out till the noon whistle sounded and Will opened the gate for those operatives and other hands to go out who went to their homes for their dinners.

The new time-keeper was sorry that his chum was the first person he had to report for not arriving on time, but he couldn't help it.

Saturday afternoon at half-past four it was Will's duty to carry a box with the pay envelopes to the foremen of the different floors.

There were only three stories to the factory, and he had just handed over the last batch of envelopes to the foreman of the top floor, where most of the girls were employed at the knitting machines, when a loud explosion took place at one corner of room, and a cloud of steam filled the air.

Some startled girl shouted "Fire!" and made a rush for the corridor where the elevator shaft was.

Her cries and actions started a panic among the

other girls, who had been alarmed by the explosion, and a concerted rush was made for the corridor.

Will saw at a glance that there was going to be trouble unless the frantic girls could be headed off and reassured.

He knew there was no actual danger, as it was only the cylinder-head of a small engine on that floor which had blown off.

He made a rapid dash for the corridor himself, and was pleased to see that the iron door of the elevator shaft was closed.

To prevent the mob of girls crushing up against it in their terror he spurted to reach it before them.

As he slipped ahead of the girls, one with a scream threw up her hands and fell forward in a swoon.

"Back!" cried Will in ringing tones, as he dropped the cash-box and raised the fainting girl from the floor. "Back, all of you! There is no fire."

CHAPTER XII.—In which love and loyalty point the way to fame and fortune.

His words and resolute attitude had their effect in a few minutes, and the operatives began to recover from their sudden fright.

He talked soothingly and encouragingly to them, and the foreman coming up to help him out, the girls were induced to return to their machines.

Will carried Jessie into the dressing-room and revived her with applications of cold water.

"Oh, Will, Will, save me!" were her first words on coming to.

"Brace up; you're not in any danger," he replied.

"Yes, yes, we all are! The factory is afire!" she cried with a look of terror in her eyes.

"Don't you believe it. There isn't any fire nearer than the engine-room."

Jessie was so badly scared that Will had some trouble in convincing her that her fears were groundless.

"Come, now, go and get your pay envelope, for it's nearly time to quit for the week."

He went with her as far as the foreman's desk, and then recovering his cash-box he returned downstairs to report to Mr. Bacon what had happened on the top floor.

The bookkeeper thanked him for saving his daughter from being trampled on by the terrified girls and assured him that the superintendent would appreciate his presence of mind in averting a panic that might easily have been attended with very serious results.

Up on the top floor work had stopped for the day and the dressing-room was filled with the girls, most of them quite nervous over the late excitement.

Every one of them felt grateful to Will Leggatt, and they could talk of nothing else but his nervy action in their behalf.

As Will suspected they would try to make a hero of him when they left the building, he got permission to quit five minutes before the whistle blew at five, and then he hurried down Main Street to the store.

The departure of Curtis Jewell from the village, coupled with the fact that Will, in furnishing the local editor with a narrative of the cowardly at-

tack made on Caleb Jarley on the cliffs, had declared he would only know the chief ruffian if he saw him again, put Mr. Scudder at his ease once more.

The wound on Jarley's head was healing up in good shape, and he was no longer confined to the room.

He sat around the house or walked out in the little garden, as the mood seized him, like a person in a dream.

He talked a good deal about Horace Goodwin, his daughter who had married Edward Bacon, a will he was carrying in a tin box, and how careful he must be of it lest Curtis Jewell get hold of it, destroy it, and then get possession of the Goodwin property.

He repeated all this over so often that Mr. Bacon got a pretty clear idea of the situation.

He readily understood that Horace Goodwin, his father-in-law, had died recently, after making a new will doing justice to the daughter he had banished from his home nearly eighteen years since.

This will, it appeared, he had confided to Caleb Jarley for delivery to Edward Bacon, and he had come to Roanoke to fulfill his mission, carrying the will in a tin box.

Having deduced the foregoing facts from the old man's rambling talk, Mr. Bacon, in view of the fact that the tin case was the only thing that seemed to have been taken from Jarley's person after the assault on the cliffs, came to the conclusion that the old man's mission to Roanoke had become known to some interested party, presumably Curtis Jewell, and that this person had followed Jarley to the village with an accomplice, had managed to entice his victim out on the cliffs after dark, and had forcibly taken the case from his person after a desperate struggle, during which the old man had been badly hurt.

After considering the matter from all points, Mr. Bacon decided that the circumstances justified him calling the services of a detective into the case.

Accordingly, he took the early Sunday morning train for Boston.

Will met Jessie after Sunday-school as usual and accompanied her home.

In answer to his inquiry about Caleb Jarley, the girl told him that the old man was improving in every way but mentally.

"However, my father has gleaned enough from his disjointed talk to satisfy him that Mr. Jarley came here to deliver a tin box containing a valuable document to us," added Jessie.

"Then you have some evidence to show that the old man really had such a case in his possession when he was attacked?" said Will.

"Yes, my father is sure of it. He also feels certain that another person was so deeply interested in the contents of the box that he and a companion followed Mr. Jarley down here from Boston, lured him out on the cliffs, and attacked him for the purpose of getting the case away from him. As the box is missing the inference is that the rascal secured it. If he really did, I'm afraid it will be a bad thing for us. The matter is so serious that father went to Boston this morning to consult with a detective."

"Well, I think the man who registered at the hotel as William Brown ought to be looked after," said Will. "I told you and your father that I strongly suspect that he is one of the men who at-

tacked Caleb Jarley. The more I think the matter over the more I am convinced that the man I saw at the station the night of Jarley's arrival, and subsequently encountered on the cliffs, was William Brown in disguise. The inquiries he made about your father, and which he made no effort to avail himself of, add to the evidence against him. Maybe William Brown wasn't his real name, either."

"If he is the man we suspect, his name is Curtis Jewell," replied Jessie.

"Curtis Jewell, eh? I am satisfied that my uncle is well acquainted with him. Perhaps I can find out if this William Brown really is Curtis Jewell."

"It would be very much to our interest to know if the well-dressed stranger who represented himself as William Brown is Curtis Jewell," said Jessie earnestly.

"Then leave the matter to me," replied Will in a determined tone. "You say if this Curtis Jewell got the tin case it would be a bad thing for you?"

"Yes."

"Well, it's my opinion that neither he nor anybody else has it. I'll bet a whole lot that it's down at the bottom of the rift."

"That is just as bad for us as if he had got it and destroyed the will that we believe is inside of it."

"The tin box contained a will, did it?" said the boy in an interested tone.

"I did not mean to tell that," said Jessie, looking a bit confused, "because—because a family secret is connected with it."

"Oh, well, you needn't mind me, Jessie. You know I think too much of you to breathe a word of anything that passes between us. You know that, don't you?" he said, taking her hand and putting his other arm around her waist. "You must know that I think more of you than any one else in the world. I have often wished you were my sister; but lately I have changed my mind about that. If you were my sister I'd lose you some time. Some other fellow would take you away. Now I want to take you away myself some day and keep you always, for I love you very dearly. Do you believe me?"

"Yes," she said after a pause, turning her head away.

"Do you care for me in the same way? I'm only a factory boy, though I have been advanced to the office, but I mean to be something better than an ordinary workman by and by. I mean to rise in the world, and when I do I'm going to ask you to be my wife—that is, if you care enough for me to wait. Do you love me enough to wait for me?"

He pressed her gently to him.

"What's your answer, dear?"

"It is 'yes,' for I love you, Will, with all my heart, and I never will care for anybody else but you."

Then they sealed their own betrothal with a kiss.

For some time after that the tin case, and everything else, was forgotten in the new bliss that filled their young hearts, as they walked along the cliff path.

Finally Jessie said:

"I am sure it will be right for me to tell you our family story in order that you may understand how much depends on the contents of the tin box

that poor old Caleb Jarley was bringing to us when he was struck down in such a cowardly manner."

"I don't ask you to tell me, dear. I don't want to pry into your private affairs."

"As you have asked me to be your wife some day, and I have promised to marry you whenever you are ready to take me, I feel that there can be no harm in telling you how my father won and married my mother against my grandfather's wishes, and how poor mother was cast off and disinherited in consequence, and died without seeing or hearing from her father again."

Seated on a green turfy patch of ground under the shadow of Storm Stone Rock, with the sunshine sifting through her golden hair, and the placid surface of the broad Atlantic sparkling before them, Jessie told Will the story of a brave little woman's devotion to, and sacrifice for, the man she loved better than all the world besides.

It would have been a sad story but for the loyalty and love the man gave to the woman who had given up fortune and social position for his sake.

Will never said a word during the entire recital, but when Jessie bowed her head and wept as she recounted the trials her father and mother went through because fortune took sides against them, he put his arms around her, kissed her quivering lips and comforted her as best he knew how.

"Years went by and mother learned that grandfather had taken her only cousin, Curtis Jewell, into his home and made him his heir," went on Jessie. "After a time father found out that Mr. Jewell was leading a fast life on the strength of the liberal allowance grandfather was giving him, and he often wondered how my grandfather stood for it. He could only account for it on the supposition that his father-in-law was not aware of the true facts. Finally mother took sick and died, and that almost broke father's heart. Only that he had me to care for, who he said was the living image of mother when he married her, it is hard to say how he would have borne up under the bitter blow. A year later we moved down here, when the knitting mill was built and put in operation, and here we have been, with my aunt for housekeeper, ever since."

"I think I can finish your story myself," said Will, as Jessie paused. "Your grandfather found out at last the true character of Curtis Jewell, and his heart turned back to your mother, as he realized he had not treated her fairly, and was being punished for it through the undeserving nephew he had made his heir. Feeling may be that he was near his end he made a new will in favor of your mother, gave it in charge of Caleb Jarley, and told him to deliver it as soon as he was dead into your father's hands. Curtis Jewell, however, found this fact out, and not wanting to lose his hold on his uncle's wealth, he watched the old man closely, and as soon as he found that he was coming down here he preceded him by a day or two so as to look over the ground and complete his plans for getting the will away from the messenger. As a precautionary measure he signed the fictitious name of William Brown on the hotel register so that his connection with the case might not afterward be suspected. Then he took advantage of an old acquaintanceship with my uncle, Mr. Scudder, and through some hold he may have on him,

he compelled my uncle to help him out in his scheme."

"Why, Will, surely Mr. Scudder has had nothing to do with——"

"I am sorry to say that he had. I will tell you a secret that you must not breathe even to your father till I give you permission. Mr. Scudder was one of the two men who assaulted Caleb Jarley on the cliffs. I recognized him, but have kept the knowledge to myself. Mr. Scudder himself does not suspect that I am aware of his rascality."

"Oh, Will, is that really true?" cried the astonished girl.

"It is true. There is no doubt whatever now in my mind that William Brown is not only Curtis Jewell but the man who struck down Caleb Jarley. He had the tin case in his hand when I came up. Startled by my sudden appearance on the scene, he dropped it, and it fell into the rift, and there it lies now at the bottom with the will, which means so much to you, in it. Jessie, I am going to recover that case at any risk for your sake."

"No, no, Will, you must not venture down there!" the girl cried, throwing her arms around the boy she loved. "Indeed you must not! It is too dangerous!"

"It may not be as dangerous as you think with the help of a rope."

"But if it is under the water you never will be able to recover it."

"I have heard that everything is possible to him who has the will to contrive and the power to execute. I have the will, whether I have the power remains to be seen. If your mother loved your father so that she unhesitatingly sacrificed a fortune for him, should I hesitate when the chance offers for me to regain that fortune for you even at a risk? No; I have given you my love, Jessie, and my life is equally at your service."

"Will, Will, you're the best and dearest boy in all the world; but you must not risk your life in the rift even for my sake," she cried tearfully.

Will looked into her streaming eyes and kissed her trembling lips.

If he needed inspiration for his perilous venture he found it in her lovely face, so her words were not heeded by him.

He had determined on his course, and would put it through at any hazard.

CHAPTER XIII.—How Will Finds the Tin Case and Something Else as Well.

Two hours later Will and his chum Joe Rylance stood under the shadow of Storm Stone Rock, the former prepared to undertake his risky adventure, and the latter ready to help him out to the best of his ability.

Will carried a rope long enough to reach from the top of the rift to the surface of the water below, while Joe carried a heavy iron wedge and a small sledge-hammer. The boys had paused to put knots into the rope at a distance of a yard apart. They soon found a crevice in the rocks where the wedge could be driven in and counted upon to hold tight. As soon as this part of the work had been completed to Will's satisfaction, he tied one end of the rope securely to the iron wedge and then threw the rope itself down into the rift, where it dangled within an inch of

the surface of the water, which was at low tide.

Will then knelt down and lowered himself over the edge of the rift. As his head disappeared over the edge, and the rope shivered under the weight of the descending body, Jessie came bounding up to the spot, her face showing the anxiety she felt over the outcome of her boy lover's venture.

"Joe, Joe, I'm so nervous!" she cried.

"Cut it out, Jess. Will's going down and it won't do any good to make any squeal over it."

"Oh, dear! If he should fall he'd be killed!"

"I'll gamble on it he won't tell. The rope is knotted all the way down. He can't fall as long as he holds on, and I'll bet he won't take any more chances than he can help. Take a look at him. He's swinging as gracefully as a circus performer." Jessie, with her heart in her mouth, ventured to look down. Some awful stories had been told about the perilous character of the rift. The dangers of the rift, however, were much exaggerated, but at the best it was a bad place to monkey about in.

Will kept on going down, fending himself off from the sharp rocks, and looking around sharply on the chance that the tin case might have lodged on some shelf not visible from above. The rocks were bare all about him, and there was nothing for him to do but keep right on. At length his bare feet touched the water, for he had removed his shoes and stockings before starting, and then he swung himself on to a ledge and knelt down. In that position his eyes came on a level with an aperture in the side of the rift, and a gleam of sunshine piercing the chasm reflected from a wet rock at the water's edge glistened upon a piece of brass.

"I wonder what that is?" thought Will. "It looks like a brass-bound box." He put his hand into the hole and pulled the thing out. It was a small brass-bound oak box.

"Here's a find. I wonder what's in it? Can't be a great deal, for it feels light. It's a fine-looking box, though the shine it all off it. I'm going to freeze on to it. Funny how it came to be stowed away in that hole just above high-water mark. I don't see how any one would take the trouble to climb down here to hide it. Possibly the person rowed here in a boat, but he was taking chances doing it. Maybe it's a quantity of stolen money in bills. If the bills were large enough you could stow a fortune in this box. Well, I've got no time to figure what it contains. I'll just tie it to the end of the rope and then attend to the business that brought me down here."

There was a flat brass handle at each end of the box which folded into an indentation in the wood made to receive it, and Will passed the end of the rope through one of them and made it fast. Then he turned his attention once more to the recovery of the tin case. If it was anywhere it was down in the water. As the water was a dark green color, and opaque, and its depth even at present low tide was unknown to Will, it looked like a hopeless job to expect to find anything lying on the bottom of the rift. The boy looked down into it with a rueful stare.

"If I knew the exact spot where the case fell in, it wouldn't be such a wild-goose chase; but I haven't the least idea. It's like hunting for a needle in a haystack to go down into the water

and feel around for it, supposing there is a little undertow to-day to make the experiment dangerous. I wonder how deep it is now? At high water the tide comes up to this point," and he looked at a clinging line of sea-weed upon the rocks. "When there's a gale on it pours into this chasm like it would into the mouth of a funnel."

Will saw a piece of wood that had been washed in from the sea and taken lodgment in a crevice. It was all of six feet long, and the factory lad thought he would get it and try to ascertain the depth of the water with it. So he crept from rock to rock with great caution till he got near enough to reach the end of the wood.

As he started to lift it he saw something glistening between it and the rocky wall of the rift. Creeping closer he reached over and grasped it. It was a thin, oblong, japanned tin case. Will uttered a shout of satisfaction, for this must surely be the box he had come after.

CHAPTER XIV.—In Which Good Fortune Comes to Jessie.

"Talk about luck!" he breathed. "This beats the deck. I never would have looked behind that piece of wood for the case. If I hadn't come after the wood to use it for testing the depth of the water with, the tin case might have remained hidden there indefinitely. Won't Jessie and her father be pleased to death to get it? This is where I have put a spoke in Curtis Jewell's wheel, and saved a fortune for the finest girl in all the world." With the same caution as before Will made his way back to the hanging rope.

His mission had been triumphantly successful, and he climbed up with a happy heart. Although both Joe and Jessie looked down constantly during the time Will was in the depths of the rift, they only caught an occasional and partial view of him owing to an overhanging shelf of rock. At length the quivering of the rope showed that he was coming up.

Jessie waited with anxious impatience for him to reach the top, not that she had any great expectations of his having found the precious case, but because she was much worried over his stay below. As Will stuck his head above the edge of the rift Joe extended a hand to him and pulled him up the rest of the way.

"I'm so glad you've come up," said Jessie earnestly.

"Why, you didn't expect I'd stay down there indefinitely, did you?" chuckled Will.

"Well, you didn't see any trace of the case, did you?" she said.

"I did better than that—I found the case itself," he answered.

"Will Leggatt, you didn't!" she screamed incredulously.

"Didn't I? What do you call that?" and he flashed the oblong box before her eyes. Jessie uttered a little shriek of delight as Will placed the case in her hands. Disregarding Joe's presence, she threw her arms around Will's neck and kissed him twice on the lips.

"Now I'm going to pull up my own prize package," said the factory boy.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Joe, somewhat puzzled.

"Wait till you see what I found down there," replied Will, hauling up the line slowly and carefully, lest he shake the brass-bound box off the rope. In a few minutes he landed it on the rocks, an object of great curiosity to both Joe and the girl.

"Where did you find it?" asked Joe. "It looks as if it held something of value."

"I found it in a hole in the rock just above high-water mark," replied Will, coiling up the line which had done him such good service. "Take the hammer, Joe, and knock out the wedge. Mr. Scudder would have a fit if I failed to return it to the store, though it isn't worth anything to speak of." The wedge was removed from the crevice and then the trio took up their march for the cottage. On their arrival Jessie wanted them to remain for tea, but they declined the invitation, Will promising to call later if nothing prevented. During their walk back to the village the two boys speculated as to the contents of the brass-bound box.

"How are you going to open it, Will?" Joe asked. "It would be a pity to smash it, for it's a valuable box, though somewhat old-fashioned. If it was revarnished and polished it would look good enough for a king's drawing-room."

"Higgings, the locksmith, will probably be able to open it with some of his tools," replied Will. "I shouldn't care to break or deface it just to get at the contents in a hurry, for the box may be a great deal more valuable than what is inside."

"Oh, nobody would put valueless things into a box of that kind," said Joe. "It is either sure to contain gold or silver, or even jewelry of any weight, or it contains valuable documents, like bonds, stocks, or legal documents. In fact, it is my opinion that it contains papers of value to no one but the owner and not money at all." Will was of the same opinion, too, but as long as he did not know he entertained a covert kind of hope that he would make something out of his prize.

They parted outside the store and Will carried the box to his room without being observed by either Mrs. Watts or his uncle. He locked it up in his trunk and returned downstairs. Now that the tin case had found its way into the hands of those for whom it was evidently intended, and he was fully satisfied, after hearing Jessie's story, that the stranger who had registered at the hotel as Brown was really Curtis Jewel, Will reconsidered his intention of forcing the truth from Mr. Scudder by threatening to expose him as the accomplice of the well-dressed rascal.

"I'll keep that advantage in reserve and use it to make my uncle tell the truth about my father as soon as I get ready for business, which will be pretty soon," said Will to himself, as he walked into the sitting-room and found the table set for tea. After the meal he started for the station on his wheel to get the Sunday night mail. When the train rolled in, the only persons who alighted were Mr. Bacon and a small, alert-looking man, known to the Boston police department as the cleverest detective on the force. They both entered the Roanoke House 'bus and were driven to the village, followed by Will with the

mail-bag. Mr. Bacon left the sleuth at the hotel and went home, where a great surprise awaited him, as the reader knows. Jessie met him at the door and entered the sitting-room on his arm.

"I've set the ball rolling, Jessie, and I have strong hopes, with the evidence that Will Leggatt can furnish, to catch Curtis Jewell in a trap that will land him in the State prison, but if he has destroyed the will, he probably took from Caleb Jarley, we will be forced into a long and expensive fight to establish your claim to your grandfather's property."

"Can you stand a big surprise, father?" asked Jessie with dancing eyes.

"A big surprise! What do you mean?"

"I mean that Curtis Jewell did not get grandfather's will after all."

"How do you know he didn't?" said Mr. Bacon, looking hard at his daughter.

"Will was right when he said that the tin case fell into the rift."

"What makes you so sure of it?"

"Because Will went down into the rift this afternoon and found it. Here it is." She placed the unopened case in her father's hands as she spoke, and he stared at it like one who is not sure of the evidence of his own eyes.

"My goodness, Jessie!" ejaculated her father. "Is this really the case?"

"I am sure it is, for Will brought it up out of the rift. Open it and see if the will is inside. I was tempted to do that fifty times, but I thought it was right you should be the first to examine it." The cover was held close by two small clasps, easily moved, and Mr. Bacon opened the case and found therein what he expected—the last will and testament of Horace Goodwin.

"It is your grandfather's will," said the bookkeeper, unfolding the document with emotion and excitement combined. It was not lengthy, and was properly executed and witnessed according to law, one of the witnesses being Caleb Jarley.

It left the bulk of Mr. Goodwin's wealth to his discarded daughter, or, if she was dead to her issue, if any. In the event that she had no children it was to be divided between certain charitable societies, the names of which were mentioned.

To his nephew, Curtis Jewell, the sum of \$1,000 was bequeathed; To Caleb Jarley, \$10,000, in consideration of faithful services and companionship, and to household servants and various old business employees different sums. A clause was inserted, evidently aimed at Curtis Jewell, that any beneficiary contesting the will was to lose the amount of his bequest. After Mr. Bacon had familiarized himself with its contents he turned to his daughter and said:

"I congratulate you, Jessie, my dear child. You are now an heiress."

"I am glad for your sake, father; but do not forget we owe all this to Will—the best, the truest boy in all the world."

CHAPTER XV.—In Which it is Hoped Everything Ends to the Satisfaction of the Reader.

Next morning Jessie did not show up at the factory, and Will, after looking up the road and seeing no sign of her, closed the gate and marked absent against her name. He had intended going

out to the Bacon cottage, after bringing the mail-bag to the post-office the evening before, but when he reached the store he found Mrs. Watts in a state of trouble and excitement. Mr. Scudder had been stricken with a sudden illness, and lay unconscious on the lounge in the sitting-room.

The housekeeper had been anxiously awaiting Will's return to send him for a doctor. The physician, when he arrived, declared that the post-master was suffering from a stroke of paralysis, and ordered him to bed. Will got a neighbor to help him carry his uncle up to his chamber and put him to bed, and then he and the housekeeper watched him by turns during the night. When Mr. Scudder recovered his senses he was unable to move in bed, as his entire right side was numb and useless to him, and he looked like a ghost of himself.

Mrs. Watts said she would look after him during the day, so Will started for the factory at the usual time. When Mr. Bacon reached his desk he told Will that Jessie had quit work at the Mill for good, as here was no longer any necessity for her to make her living, since through the terms of her grandfather's will she was an heiress. The bookkeeper thanked the factory boy in feeling terms for risking his life in the rift to recover the tin case that meant so much to his daughter.

"You sha'n't lose anything by it, my lad," he continued. "You will never lack a friend as long as I live, or Jessie either." Soon after the superintendent arrived he called Will into his office and complimented him on his conduct Saturday afternoon in stopping the panic among the girls on the third floor.

He said he would lay the matter before the president of the company, and he did not doubt but that his conduct would be suitably recognized. When Will came into the counting-room again, Mr. Bacon told him that the detective he had brought down with him from Boston the evening before had called to have a talk with him about the attack on Caleb Jarley and other matters that appeared to have a bearing on the outrage.

He then introduced the boy to the detective. The sleuth asked Will to walk out into the yard, and there he listened to the boy's story of what happened on the cliffs on Saturday night a week before. Will added all his suspicions about the well-dressed stranger who had registered at the hotel under the name of William Brown, and described what passed between him and the said Brown at their two brief interviews.

"That man is Curtis Jewell, or I am very much mistaken," concluded Will.

"What leads you to suppose so?" asked the detective quietly, who, having heard certain facts from Mr. Bacon, was quite satisfied on that point himself.

"Because I know he is the person most interested in the disappearance of Horace Goodwin's will. Now that you have the motive you ought to be able to work up a case against Jewell." The detective, having got all he wanted out of Will, went in and saw Mr. Bacon, after which he took an afternoon train back for Boston. When Will got home that afternoon he found that his uncle was about the same.

"Did the doctor say that he might die?" asked Will anxiously, for as Mr. Scudder was not able

to talk he regarded it as a misfortune to himself if the postmaster should pass away without throwing any further light on his father.

"He said that Mr. Scudder would in all probability recover from this attack in time, though he never would be the same man he was before the stroke," replied Mrs. Watts. After bringing the mail from the station and distributing it, Will left the store in charge of Billy Bray and carried the brass-bound oak box to the little store of Higgings, the locksmith.

It was soon opened. That night, in his room, he examined the contents. A piece of the newspaper lay on top.

Underneath lay a pile of documents tied with a piece of red tape. There was nothing else in the box, much to Will's disappointment. He untied the tape and looked at the writing on the backs of the different papers, which were doubly sealed with big dabs of red wax, on each of which was imprinted an official seal that gave them an important look.

"They appear to be official documents, all right," said Will to himself, "but blessed if I can make head or tail out of them from what is on the backs." After pondering over them for a while he laid them down and picked up the folded newspaper. It was dated a year back, and in the middle of the first page was a column article with a large "scare heading" that was marked with blue pencil at the top and bottom.

"I wonder if this has anything to do with the box?" Will breathed. The only way to find out was by reading it, so Will started in to do so. In a few minutes he was deeply interested in the newspaper story, which, he discovered, was vitally connected with the brass-bound box and its contents.

It was the report of the theft of State Department papers of the utmost importance to the United States Government, and incidentally to another nation as well. The disappearance of these papers threatened grave complications, and the possible monetary loss of many millions to the American Government. A dozen secret service men were looking for the box, as well as the man who had stolen it, whose identity was hinted at but not disclosed.

Will easily saw that his discovery of the box was a very important matter, and he decided to take counsel with Mr. Bacon at once. Taking the box under his arm he started for the cottage, where his late visit occasioned not a little surprise. He told the bookkeeper that he wanted to see him about a very important matter, so Mr. Bacon ushered him into the sitting-room and closed the door. The boy then showed him the brass-bound box which Jessie had already told him Will had found in the rift while hunting for the tin case.

Taking out the newspaper Will handed it to the bookkeeper and asked him to read the marked article. Mr. Bacon did so, and then the boy told him the papers in the box were those that had been stolen from the Government, and about which such a time had been made. After assuring himself that Will had spoken nothing but the truth, Mr. Bacon said that the finding of the documents was bound to make him a famous boy, and probably win him a large monetary recognition from the State Department.

"I will take charge of this matter in your in-

terest, Will, and will communicate with Washington at once," he said.

"All right," replied the boy, rising and taking his leave. Three days later the afternoon train brought a secret service man to Roanoke. He called on Mr. Bacon immediately and presented an official letter from the Department of State requesting him to turn the brass-bound box over to the messenger. This was done, and then the man asked to be introduced to Will Leggatt. Will told him the story of the finding of the box, told him why he had opened it, but assured him that he had not attempted to pry into the nature of the papers.

The man told him that he would be taken care of and then departed. A few days later the entire press of the country published an account of the recovery of the missing official papers by Will Leggatt, of Roanoke village, Mass. Thus Will practically became famous in a day. But he also got something more tangible than mere reputation, for the Government sent him a reward of \$50,000, which made him a rich boy.

Before he got the money, however, he found out that he was heir to a third interest in a Colorado gold and silver mine, the dividends of which Mr. Scudder had been receiving for about ten years, and hoarding up in his strong-box in his bedroom. This discovery came about through a letter addressed to his uncle, marked important, which Will had taken the liberty to open because Mr. Scudder was in no shape to do so himself. The letter contained an offer from a Western capitalist for Will's interest in the mine.

Will showed the letter to Mr. Bacon, who at once took charge of the boy's interests, ascertained that the offer was a good one, and closed with it in Mr. Scudder's name. As soon as the postmaster was able to be around again he was subjected to a third degree interview by Mr. Bacon and Will, and compelled to own up that he had been using the boy's inheritance for his own personal advantage. Will told him then that he had recognized him that night on the cliffs in the companionship of the disgraced Curtis Jewell, alias William Brown, and on condition of keeping the matter quiet Mr. Scudder signed a statement admitting that the boy's suspicions about Brown were well founded, and that Curtis Jewell was an old acquaintance.

In the meanwhile Jewell had got a lawyer to probate the original will, but before many days elapsed he was arrested on the charge of conspiracy and murderous assault on Caleb Jarley. Such a strong case was made out against him that he pleaded guilty and threw himself on the mercy of the court. Edward Bacon asked that he be treated with leniency, and so the judge handed him out the minimum sentence and he went to prison for two years.

Ultimately the Goodwin wealth passed into Mr. Bacon's hands in trust for his daughter, who received it on the day of her marriage to Will Leggatt, when she was twenty-one and he a year older. He was then owner and president of the Roanoke Knitting Mill, in which establishment he had once been "only a factory boy."

Next week's issue will contain "FOX & DAY, BROKERS; or, THE YOUNG MONEY-MAKERS OF WALL STREET."

TURNED AWAY

— OR —

A BOY IN SEARCH OF HIS NAME

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER I.

The Beginning Of The Trouble.

"I say, fellows, here comes that silly Tom Brown. Let's have some fun with him."

"Yes, let's make him dance and sing for us."

"That'll be great sport. Come on, let's get him rattled."

Four well-dressed boys, ranging in age from sixteen to eighteen years, stood on a corner in a seacoast town in New England.

They were all sons of rich men, and the leader, Harold Wintringham, was the spoiled child of the richest of them.

His father owned half the town, was president of the local bank, and had other interests.

He had a fine mansion in Wave Crest, and another in Boston, where he lived in winter.

Harold was his only child, and had been petted and spoiled till now he was impudent, arrogant and selfish. But his father was blind to his faults and built all his honor on the boy.

The boys were all smoking cigarettes when Harold attracted their attention to a boy coming along the street, trundling a wheelbarrow full of garden truck.

His name was Tom Brown, he was poor, an orphan, and not in the full possession of his mental faculties.

They threw away their cigarettes as Tom approached, and one of them, Claude Worthington by name, reeled against the poor boy in a manner to make him lose his grip on the barrow handles, so that it was upset and the contents spilled in the street.

Cabbages, turnips, potatoes and other vegetables began to roll in the dust, to Tom's dismay, and then, as he began to gather them up, the boys only added to his troubles by kicking the things about.

"It's a perfect shame to treat a poor boy that way," said a young girl on the opposite corner, who had witnessed the affair.

Harold kicked a clean, white cabbage into a puddle of muddy water at the foot of the pump, Claude sent a lot of nice potatoes rolling in the dust, and the others performed similar acts.

At last the poor boy, angered by his tormentors, and utterly reckless of consequences, picked up a stone and hurled it at random at the boys.

It struck Harold on the side of the cheek, made an ugly gash, drew blood, and caused the boy to cry out with pain.

"Let's duck the fool!" he cried. "That'll teach him better manners. Come on, let's duck him!"

The four sprang upon the half-witted boy and dragged him to the pump.

Harold and Claude held his head under the

spout while the other two boys seized the pump-handle and began to deal sturdy strokes which sent the water gushing forth in a perfect flood.

Not more than one good draught had struck the poor fellow, however, before a handsome, manly boy of seventeen, wearing a suit of blue flannel, and a neat straw hat, came hurrying across the street.

"You brutes, you ought to be ashamed of yourselves!" he cried as he sprang upon the two holding Tom Brown.

He struck Harold on the forehead, pushed Claude so that he fell on his back in a puddle, and then pulled Tom away.

Haven't you anything better to do than to abuse a poor, silly boy like Tom Brown? Four of you, too! You ought to be ashamed, you cowards!"

Harold was older and stronger than the newcomer, and he now said, blusteringly:

"You mind your own business, Cliff Howard. The fool threw a stone at me, and I ducked him for it. I'll do the same to you if you don't shut up."

"If he threw a stone at you there must have been some reason for it," said Clifton Howard, as he was called. "He never attacks any one unless he is set upon, and you know it."

The young lady on the opposite corner now hurried across and said:

"The poor boy did throw a stone, but these ruffians first tormented him, upset his barrow, and began kicking and throwing his vegetables all about. I was on the other corner and saw the whole thing, and I think it was a perfect shame. The poor boy served them just right."

Harold Wintringham's face turned a vivid red, and he stared in amazement at the young girl, who was dressed all in white, even to her shoes, and carried a white parasol.

The girl was a stranger in the place, and none of the four rich young fellows had seen her before.

Cliff had seen her at the hotel that morning, when she arrived with her father, who was old and somewhat feeble, but he did not know her name.

"Well, suppose I did?" sneered Harold, in answer to the girl's bold statement of facts. "Can't I have a little fun if I like? Ain't I able to pay for his rotten vegetables? I was only having some fun with him, and he didn't need to get nasty about it. I'll duck him again if I choose."

"You're a brute and a loafer!" said the girl, hotly, "and if you're a sample of the young men of the town, I don't want to see any more of them. Just a little fun! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"I haven't any time to waste on girls," said Harold, rudely. "Who are you, anyway? I never saw you before."

"Harold Wintringham, if you say another insulting word to this young lady I'll give you the biggest thrashing you ever had," cried Cliff.

"Oh, you will, hey?" said the other, insultingly. "What business is it of yours?"

"It's the business of every gentleman to protect ladies from insult. This young lady saw your brutality, and proved you to be a liar, as I have always known you to be, and you insult her. Apologize now, or——"

"Well, or what?" interrupted Harold, relying upon his greater strength to easily dispose of this impudent young fellow, the son of a man not one

tenth as rich or as important as his own father.

"I'll thrash you, that's what," said Clif, determinedly.

Clif's face turned the color of snow as Harold Wintringham uttered these insults, and before he had finished the boy's fist shot out and took the other full in the mouth.

Harold was nearly knocked down, but recovering himself, said, with a cold, cruel expression:

"You took me off my guard, but now I'll give you a chance to get on your own. Do you know who I am, you nameless cur? You think you are the son of Walsingham Howard, but you ain't. You're nobody, the son of a tramp, a good-for-nothing——"

"Take care!" said Clif, in a low, quiet tone, which Harold Wintringham should have known was all the more dangerous than bluster. "Take that back or you'll regret it as long as you live."

"I won't!" said Harold.

Clif took off his coat and hat and handed them to Tom, who still stood near him.

Harold Wintringham had barely time to put himself on guard before Clif flew at him.

He was older, bigger and stronger than the boy whom he had so grossly insulted, but he did not have half the other's quickness and skill in boxing, as he speedily discovered.

Clif fairly rained blows on Harold's head, face and chest, and finally delivered one which caused him to fall, strike his head on the iron spout of the pump, and drop half conscious at the base.

The affair had attracted a number of spectators, and the majority of these now gave a cheer.

Harold arose weakly to his feet and walked away.

Clif took his hat and coat from Tom Brown and said to the young lady who had remained a witness of the entire affair:

"I should be sorry if you judged all our boys by this one, for there are lots of good fellows in Wave Crest. May I see you to the hotel? You are staying there, I believe?"

"Yes, and I shall be delighted to have you go there with me. I was never more glad of anything than to see you whip that braggart and bully. He richly deserved it."

"Yes," said Clif, "but I'm afraid there's trouble to come from it."

There was indeed.

CHAPTER II.

Harold Has The Worst Of It Again.

After seeing that Tom Brown had reloaded his barrow, and was safe from further annoyance, Clif set out for the hotel with the young girl.

On the way thither Clif's companion told him that she was Miss Ada Kidder, of New York, and that she and her father had come to Wave Crest for a few weeks' recreation.

"He likes these out-of-the-way places," she explained, "and for the last three or four summers we have been in many such. Father knows something about boats, and he is constantly cruising along shore, peering into strange places, as if looking for something, and people have often said that he was in search of Captain Kidd's treasure, and that his name was really Kidd."

"Has he a boat now? If not I can recommend one. Tom Brown, although simple, understands the management of them, and has a sloop of his own, made from an old yawl, which would quite suit your father's purpose. Tom is very skilful, and you can trust him thoroughly."

"Father spoke to an old boatman named Captain Peter, and we have engaged his boat. Father will want it alone most of the time, but the boatman said he would get us some one to sail it if we wished."

"That would mean Tom, then," said Clif, with a laugh, "for he lives with Captain Peter, and often takes out a party in his own or the old man's boat."

Clif saw Mr. Kidder, who seemed older than his actual years, being bent and careworn, his hair white, his limbs feeble, his step uncertain, and having a look in his eyes which spoke of some secret sorrow which had made him an old man before his time.

Taking his leave and promising to call the next day, Clif started for home by a short-cut over the bluff and down to the beach and so around to his own home.

Clifton Howard was known as the only son of Walsingham Howard, a man of some wealth and importance in Wave Crest, but nowhere near as rich as Mr. Wintringham.

He had been well educated at the high school in town, was a good sailor, an all-around athlete, and was well liked by every one except Harold Wintringham's set, whom he neither liked nor emulated, considering it the reverse of manly to smoke, drink, and idle away his time as they did.

As he made his way toward home the words of Harold Wintringham came back to him, and he felt his blood grow hot, and then cold.

"What could he have meant?" he thought. "Pshaw! he simply said the first thing that came into his head. He is a blusterer and a braggart, and a liar to boot, and I should not pay any attention to such as he."

On the point below the hotel he saw Tom Brown getting his boat ready for a sail, and as he came nearer the boy hailed him.

"Hello, Clif. Want to take a run out on the bay to Skillet rocks and back?"

"Yes," said Clif, and quickening his steps, he was soon alongside the boat, into which he stepped and began to help Tom to get her ready.

The Polly, as Tom called his sloop, was presently speeding across the bay on the starboard tack, with Tom at the tiller, and Clif up forward ready at the jib sheet in case they wanted to go about.

They were running toward a low-lying circular mass of reefs at the mouth of the harbor half a mile from shore, known as Skillet rocks, over which the water fairly surged and boiled whenever there was a storm. At such times there was no more dangerous spot along the coast for miles.

Just at this time, however, the surf seemed scarcely to break on the reefs, and no one would have dreamed that it was as dangerous as it was.

"We'll have a blow this evenin', Clif," said Tom. "It's gettin' ready for it now. We'll have plenty time, though."

"Well, perhaps you are right, Tom," said Clif, who knew that the half-witted boy was usually correct in telling what the weather would be, even if he were not so bright in other matters.

As they went scurrying along Clif presently noticed a yacht on his port bow, and said:

"There's Harold Wintringham's boat, the Vixen, to the left of us, and on the same tack. He's got his friends with him."

"He can't go any better than the Polly," said Tom, "if his boat is bigger. I can outsail him every time."

The Vixen was a sloop yacht twenty-two feet in length, over all, and an eight-foot beam, with a bowsprit extending six feet beyond the stern, being provided with a cabin, where Harold and his friends often slept when they were on a cruise.

She had all sails set, and was booming along finely, but the boys did not know how to handle her to the best advantage, and, as Tom had said, the Polly could outsail her under his management.

Clif was up forward, keeping a lookout, for they were nearly the Skillet rocks, and it was necessary to use a certain degree of caution.

The Vixen was speeding on, to the left of the Polly, when, as they drew nearer the reefs, Clif saw Harold suddenly put his tiller to port, to go about, while Claude let go of the jib sheet, thus throwing her into the wind.

The boy divined Harold's intentions in an instant.

The Vixen would cross the Polly's bow and ram her if she continued on her present tack.

If the Polly tacked, to avoid collision, she would be in great danger of running upon the reefs, which it was very plain Harold wished to force her to do, the tide setting strongly in that direction at the time.

"What are you about?" cried Clif, as the Vixen went about. "We have the right of way. Keep off."

"Keep her as she is, Tom," called Clif. "We are on our proper course, and if anything happens it won't be our fault."

Something did happen, and speedily.

The little Polly dashed on, and, at a time when the Vixen was in the wind, struck her on the starboard bow, carrying away her bowsprit, rendering her jib useless, and causing her to remain in the wind.

There was great excitement on board the Vixen at once, the boys shouting, running about, and quite losing their heads.

Both Tom and Clif were cool, however, and did the right thing at the right moment.

The Polly's little bowsprit was broken, but Clif instantly let go the jib halliards, letting the sail fall on deck against the mast.

Then the boy pushed against the side of the Vixen, which had had a plank or two started, being built of flimsier material than the Polly, and thus worked his way astern.

The four boys on the Vixen were terribly excited, but Claude Worthington, without knowing it, did the best thing to be done under the circumstances, and let go the anchor.

Clif had not had time to avoid the collision, and was in danger of being driven on the Skillet rocks, but he had acted as he had every right to do, and now the Polly kept on, having suffered only the loss of her jib.

This was no great loss, either, for from the position of her mast so far forward, she was now practically a catboat, and could be handled without a headsail.

"Say, Clif," said Tom, as the former gathered

in the now useless jib, "them fellers just meant to run us down or put us onto the Skillet."

"To be sure they did," said Clif. "But they didn't do it, and they've lost their bowsprit and jib. They're all right now, and when they get their wits back will easily be able to work the Vixen in on a free wind. If they don't they'll have to be towed in, that's all."

"Did you hear what Harold said when we was a-goin' past? I did, 'cause I was right by him."

"Yes; he said I'd get the worst of it."

"That was funny, wasn't it, Clif? We didn't get the worst of it at all. What made him say that?"

"Oh, I guess he meant something else," said Clif, carelessly, although he was well aware what Harold's threat implied, and that trouble was certain to result from this second encounter with the bully that afternoon.

They were now well past the reefs, and presently Clif went aft and took the tiller to give Tom a chance to rest.

They kept on for a mile or two beyond the mouth of the harbor, and then put about.

"She's running in all right, just as I supposed she would," said Clif. "Anchoring her at that time was the best thing they could do, though I believe it was an accident."

Long before they passed the Skillet rocks again the Vixen had made a landing, and as they ran toward the point they could see her lying at her wharf.

"There's Cap'n Peter's boat," said Tom, pointing to a catboat at some distance. "Wonder what he's doin' out now?"

"The young lady and her father have hired her," said Clif, "and I suppose are taking their first sail."

"H'm! then it's all right," said Tom. "But I guess the old man won't stay out long," 'cause he ought to know about the storm. I bet it'll be one that folk'll remember a long time."

It was nearer the truth than he knew.

When Clif reached home there were many signs of the storm which Tom Brown had predicted, and he could readily believe that if all these signs proved true the storm would indeed be one to be remembered.

The sky became blacker and blacker, and it was necessary to light lamps in the dining-room when Clif went in to his supper, which he ate with the housekeeper, his father being often absent at the evening meal, as he was on this occasion.

Since the death of his mother, three or four years before, Clif had been left alone a great deal but the influence she had had upon his life had lasted, and he had not gone astray as too many boys do who lack a mother's care.

He had seen a great difference in his father during that time, and deplored it, while at the same time he could not seem to restore matters to their former state.

Mr. Howard had always been a passionate man, his temper, when aroused, amounting to a perfect frenzy, and this his wife had been able to control, while Clif could do little or nothing with it.

(To be continued.)

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

AEROPLANE CONCERT

An aeroplane 5,000 feet over the city of Paris broadcast a complete concert by radio.

SUNBURN BARRED

There will be no sunburned young women in the Winter Garden revue, "The Great Temptations." Since the company has adopted the practice of having company swims on nearly all non-matinee days at nearby beaches, the Winter Garden management has issued a request to the young women that they avoid sunburn.

ROCKFELLER'S GRANDSONS RIDE IN \$200 CABIN

In keeping within their own personal means, two grandsons of John D. Rockefeller, one of the world's richest men, got back from Europe recently in a cabin costing them \$100 each. They arrived on the American Merchant Line steamship American Trader.

The boys were John D. Rockefeller, 3d, and Nelson Aldridge Rockefeller, sons of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

The American Trader is one of the line's five express freight steamers which were recently partly converted into passenger carriers. Their capacity is only seventy passengers on the ship.

TEST SOIL BEFORE FERTILIZING

Ammonium nitrate performs an extremely useful function in fertilizing certain crops, especially grasses, as it enables them to take the best advantage of any phosphorus compounds present in the soil. When, however, the soil is a sandy one, ammonium nitrate is not the best fertilizer to use. The plants split it up into ammonia and nitric acid, and in a sandy soil they absorb more ammonia than nitric acid. This free acid, being left in the soil, accumulates, with the result that the soil is quickly rendered acid. It is therefore advisable to make certain of the type of soil before applying ammonium nitrate as a fertilizer.

MINIATURE RAILROAD SHOWN IN EXHIBIT AT SESQUI

A miniature railroad, built by scale and showing various types of trains of standard equipment operating on four tracks representing a typical section of the roadbed, is the principal feature of the exhibit of the Pennsylvania Railroad opened recently in the Palace of Liberal Arts and Manufactures at the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia.

Tunnels, signal towers and other mechanical contrivances are shown in accurate detail and the landscape is representative of the territory which the "Pennsy" serves. A huge painting, showing the side view of a standard steel coach, in exact dimensions, forms a background for the exhibit, while the reception room in front of the mechanical arrangement is furnished in the style used during the Colonial period.

LAUGHS

"Waiter, is this beef stew or Hungarian goulash?" "Let me see. This is Wednesday, isn't it, sir? Then it's goulash."

Nurse (taking his temperature)—Sir, you are in danger—your temperature is 104. Business Man—When it reaches 105 sell.

Best Man—What's the matter! Have you lost the ring? Bridegroom—The ring's all right, old man, but I've lost my enthusiasm."

One day last winter little Eloise was looking at a fall of unusually large snowflakes. "Oh, mamma!" she exclaimed, "Look at the popped rain coming down!"

Sister (who had just sung for charity)—Well, I never thought my voice would fill that big hall. Freshman Brother—Neither did I. I thought it would empty it.

Angry Diner—You call this clam chowder? Why, there aren't enough clams in it to flavor it. Waiter—We don't try to flavor it, sir; all we do is put in enough to christen it.

Client—I want to sue for a divorce and an allowance of \$1,500 a year. Lawyer—What is your husband's income? Client—It's about that. I wouldn't ask for more than the man makes. I'm not that kind.

Effie's Brother—Do you love my sister Effie? Effie's Steady Company—Why, Willie, that is a queer question. Why do you want to know? Effie's Brother—She said last night she would give a dollar to know, and I'd like to scoop it in.

"Did you notice that woman who just passed?" inquired he. "The one," responded she, "with the gray hat, the white feather, the red velvet roses, the mauve jacket, the black skirt, the mink furs and the lavender spats?" "Yes." "Not particularly."

THE MYSTERY OF MADHURST HOUSE

On a drowsy day in the early autumn, when everything, from the sleepy sighing of the scarcely perceptible breeze to the doleful and monotonous chirping of the crickets, seemed to woo the senses to slumber with a solicitation not to be easily resisted, particularly if one were inactive, Gerty Merrill fell asleep in an easy-chair, behind the curtain of young Mr. Alexander Madhurst's alcove smoking-room.

Madhurst House, as the old country residence was called, had been the home of the Madhurst family almost to the time "whereof the memory of man runneth not"; at least, the old stock of the past generations had resided there ever since the days of Oliver Cromwell, and long before that, if traditions faithfully handed down from father to son were to be credited.

The present occupant of the ancient edifice, "with modern improvements"—as the advertisements say—was Mr. Alexander Madhurst, the sole surviving representative of the family.

Gerty Merrill, though barely turned eighteen, was one of the most proficient and successful female attaches of the Scotland Yard detective service at the time of which I am telling you, though now she is—well, never mind what she is, I came near getting ahead of my story. You will know all before I've finished, however, so to proceed with the natural sequence of events as they transpired.

One day in summer, a couple of months preceding the memorable day when "the girl spy" fell asleep behind the curtain of the alcove at Madhurst House, Mr. Alexander Madhurst called upon me for professional advice and assistance.

His was a rather odd story, and this was its substance:

"For some months past," said he, "I have lost considerable sums of money from my sleeping-room. You may suppose quite naturally, that I don't keep a great deal of money about me, but I usually have at least fifty pounds in my pocket-book for current expenses.

"Now, invariably, when I retire to sleep it is my custom after securing the door and the windows—my room is on the second floor—to place my purse underneath my pillow, and yet, although I am never disturbed during the night, at least once a week, on examining my pocket-book in the morning upon awakening, I find that its contents are gone, and yet the mystery is, who could have taken it, for both the door and the windows I always find secured exactly as I left them upon retiring, and not the faintest trace of an intruder have I ever been able to discover?"

Mr. Madhurst paused, and I said: "Very well, sir, I will undertake the case, for I feel confident that the mystery is in the fact that there exists some secret way of ingress and egress to and from your sleeping-room, of the existence of which you are in ignorance."

Then he told me of the many additions which had been built to the old house, which was his ancestral home, and thus was my first suspicion

strengthened, and Mr. Madhurst himself coincided with my view of the case.

"I am at your service, Mr. Madhurst, for, to say the truth, there is not much doing in the criminal line just now, and I am at liberty to absent myself from London for a short time. I fancy I shall not be with you long before this mystery is cleared up. By the way, of whom does your household consist?" I asked.

"Of myself, of course; a housekeeper, coachman, butler and a couple of female domestics. I am sure, however, they are all innocent, for they have served my family faithfully for many years. No—no; not for a moment do I suspect one of my household of complicity in the thefts of which I have been made the victim," answered Mr. Madhurst in a tone of conviction.

The day I left Mr. Madhurst, one of the female servants of the house—a chambermaid—had given notice that she was about to be married and would no longer continue in his employ. Mr. Madhurst had casually mentioned that he should at once advertise in the London Times for a domestic to fill her place. I determined that Gerty Merrill should secure the place.

I thoroughly posted her regarding the mystery which she was to attempt to solve; and, sure enough, Mr. Madhurst's advertisement appeared, and my quick-witted assistant managed to secure the situation.

For some time no more mysterious thefts occurred at Madhurst House, and Gerty Merrill, who reported to me by letter, had nothing of much importance to communicate.

A certain young gentleman—a German student called Max Hertzhoff—who resided that summer with his uncle in the little village of Andover, had made Mr. Madhurst's acquaintance and became a frequent visitor at the old homestead.

I soon found out that Hertzhoff was a student of psychology, a chemist, and a general dabbler in occult mysteries, which have ever found their devotees among the students of the German universities.

Having studied Mr. Hertzhoff quietly, as occasion presented itself, until I had formed a pretty accurate opinion of his character, I came to the conclusion that this remarkable man had a deep purpose in cultivating the acquaintance of Mr. Madhurst. It then suddenly flashed upon my mind that the German might, in some way, be connected with the mystery which I was seeking to solve.

The day I fell asleep in the arm-chair behind the alcove curtain of Mr. Madhurst's smoking-room—that drowsy autumnal day—was a time when I made an unexpected discovery, as you shall hear.

When I fell asleep, concealed by the folds of the curtain, there was no one in the alcove. When I awoke with a start I heard the sound of voices.

Mr. Madhurst sat with his back toward me, but I had a good half-front view of the face of the German student. He was speaking earnestly to Madhurst.

"Then you will not let me have the loan?" said Hertzhoff.

"I assure you I am sorry that it is not in my power to assist you just at this time. If

you could wait until next month perhaps I could let you have the amount you require, although even then it would be an inconvenience to myself," Madhurst said.

"The delay would be fatal. I must strive to secure the loan elsewhere. My father, you know, is ignorant of my passion for the gaming-table, and were I to solicit him to advance the money I require it would be necessary to reveal the truth. In that case he would probably be enraged at the knowledge and refuse to serve me. I think I shall try the Shylocks of the city as a last resort."

"Perhaps you may succeed with them. I hope so, at all events. But in a friendly way I would advise you, Max, to let cards alone. Expert as you are, you occasionally meet with serious losses, and in the end the gamster generally comes to poverty and want."

"That's so, Madhurst, and I think I shall try to take your advice, which I can but acknowledge to be excellent. The trouble with me is that the gaming-table possesses an irresistible attraction, a sort of fascination which can only be comprehended by the confirmed gambler."

During this conversation the German student had kept his eyes upon the face of his companion, and now in amazement I beheld Mr. Madhurst's face slowly growing very pale, while gradually his head sank down upon his breast and his eyes closed as though he had suddenly fallen asleep.

The result of this strange proceeding was at once to cause Mr. Madhurst to breathe heavily, and there could now be no doubt that he was completely oblivious to all his surroundings.

"Now, then, to search the drawer," the German said.

He strode to the far end of the alcove, out of my sight, and heard him prying open the drawer of Mr. Madhurst's writing-desk which stood there. In a moment or so he reappeared.

"Ha, I have found it!" he exclaimed in an exultant whisper.

As he spoke he placed a folded paper—which I supposed he had taken from the drawer—in the inside pocket of his coat.

He was gone in a moment.

I sprang to Mr. Madhurst's side and aroused him by dashing a glass of ice-water in his face. The young man sprang to his feet.

"Mr. Madhurst, you have been victimized by a clever scoundrel, who possesses the power to mesmerize you. After putting you into a mesmeric trance, as he did just now, your esteemed friend, Max Hertzhoff, forced open yonder desk and possessed himself of some paper which, from his exultation in securing it, is, I suppose, of value," I said.

Madhurst rushed to the desk. Hurriedly he examined the contents of the drawer, which had been tossed about in considerable confusion.

While he was engaged in searching the desk I said:

"I must now introduce myself to you in my proper character. I am a detective; one of Mr. L——'s staff, and he sent me here to investigate the mystery which he failed to solve before business called him back to the city."

Mr. Madhurst was surprised and gratified at the same time.

"I find that a check for five hundred pounds,

which I had drawn up in favor of a creditor of mine who was to call upon me today, and which is payable by my London banker to bearer, is missing," said Mr. Madhurst.

"Not a moment must be lost. Telegraph to your bankers that the check has been stolen, and warn them not to pay it," I advised.

"I shall proceed to the village for that purpose at once."

Horses were brought around from the stable and in a few minutes we were riding rapidly on our way to the village.

While Mr. Madhurst was sending his dispatch I routed out the constable and proceeded to Mr. Hertzhoff's abode.

The gentleman we wanted was not to be found, but a farmer's boy whom we met stated that he had just passed a gentleman on horseback beyond the village who answered to Mr. Hertzhoff's description.

We had not proceeded far when we heard a deep groan from the roadside, and we saw Max Hertzhoff lying there, with a broken leg, as we soon discovered. He had been thrown from his horse. We found the stolen check in his possession.

The man made no remarks, save to curse us heartily. He was conveyed to the village jail, and finally confessed that he had compelled Madhurst to steal from himself. That is to say, during the many months of their intimacy he had acquired such complete mesmeric power over Madhurst that the latter, when he willed it, would bring his ready cash to him in the dead of night, and, of course, without the slightest knowledge of what he was doing.

Thus the mystery of Madhurst House was solved, for, of course, all the doors and windows which he found secured each morning were, in the mesmeric state, opened and properly closed and secured by Hertzhoff's victim himself."

This is where Gerty Merrill's part of the story ends.

I may add that she eventually became Mrs. Madhurst.

WARNING

Beside the curving road I sit
And when a gentle maid
To keep a tryst goes tripping by,
Half joyous, half afraid,
I cry to her, "Oh! don't go down
To that burning Autumn wood,
For there I went with my dear love,
So tall and kind and good,
And as we stood beside a tree
Where Beauty's hand was laid
We heard bright laughter in the leaves
(And suddenly I was afraid),
For a dryad, beautiful as Dawn,
Leapt from the blushing tree
And cast on my love such a curious look
That it stole his heart from me.

"Dear, don't go down to that Autumn wood,
There's nothing there but pain,
For the heart a dryad steals away
Can never be won again."

REBECCA HELMAN.

(N. Y. Times.)

CURRENT NEWS

FIFTY WHALES PASS BIG LINER

Passengers on the Atlantic Transport line Minnewaska, which arrived recently from London, via Cherbourg, saw a school of whales cross the bow of the ship forty miles east of Nantucket Lightship.

There was a fog and the speed of the liner was reduced. Fifty whales were counted by the passengers, and the last one passed close to the bow.

The officer on the bridge said the whales were going toward the Azores.

AMUNDSEN IS WELCOMED HOME BY HUGE CROWDS AT BERGEN

Captain Roald Amundsen and the Norwegian members of his expedition, which successfully flew over the North Pole in the dirigible Norge, have arrived at Bergen.

Huge crowds turned out to welcome him. The Mayor and various public bodies gathered at a banquet in honor of the explorers. The party will proceed to Oslo.

Captain Amundsen told interviewers that as no land had been seen around the Pole, the Polar Basin could be considered only as equivalent to international waters and that no nation could claim or annex the pole.

PRINCE AND ACTRESS STAGE MELO- DRAMA OF REAL LIFE

Ilenka Csaky, well known Hungarian actress and singer, provided a melodrama which surpassed anything she has done on the stage after she quarreled in a cafe in Budapest with Prince Domenico Russo, a member of the Italian Embassy staff.

After the quarrel Ilenka rushed from the cafe and hurled herself into the River Donau.

Prince Domenico was on her heels, and no sooner had Ilenka reached the rushing waters than Prince Domenico plunged over the embankment, and at the risk of his own life, brought Ilenka safely to shore.

A reconciliation is understood to have followed.

EXCAVATE COLONIAL RELICS

Excavation at Lafayette and Reade Streets, the site of Aaron Burr's well and New York City's first water works, has brought to light an iron pot containing Colonial coins, a skeleton, some old tools, a pair of ram's horns and a quantity of odd iron that has been sold as scrap for \$300.

All of the coins bore eighteenth century dates. Only two of them were post-Revolution money. An unusual motto, "Mind your own business," was engraved on one of the Colonial day pieces.

Loring M. Hewen, Managing Director of the Court Square Building, Inc., which is undertaking the excavation, said he believed the unearthed iron to be what is left of a standpipe thrown into the well many years ago.

DREAM REVIVES SEARCH FOR BOY LONG MISSING

The police have renewed their search for Harry Wiedenfeld, who disappeared from his home at

1 Goerck Street, N. Y. City, on Nov. 11, 1924, and who, if he lives, is now 8 years old.

Three detectives hunted for Harry for months after his parents, Wolfe and Esther Wiedenfeld, reported his disappearance, and every day one of them or both went to the Clinton Street Police Station or to the Missing Persons' Bureau to ask anxiously if the boy had been found. Presently they called only once a week and then, last March, evidently disheartened by the lack of the detectives' success or believing Harry dead, they ceased to call.

But a few days ago Mrs. Wiedenfeld reappeared before Captain John H. Ayres of the Missing Persons' Bureau.

"For a week," she said hesitantly, as if afraid some one might laugh at her, "I have dreamed of my boy, Harry. I see him in the little clothes he wore when he disappeared, and he holds out his arms to me and says, 'Don't give me up, mother. Keep looking for me.' My husband and I have saved \$600. We will give it to any one who can bring us news of Harry."

Captain Ayres told her the police would search without a reward.

BEER-BIBBING MONKEY, SEEKING A CHOICER FARE, WRECKS BERLIN'S FINEST WINE RESTAURANT

One innocent monkey trying to get a drink of wine wrecked one of Berlin's oldest and most aristocratic wine restaurants last night. In the melee at least a score of monocles were broken, the dignity of the Fire Department suffered and a squad of policemen was held up to ridicule.

Amid the ruins of china, glassware, broken chairs and overturned tables, the formerly dignified proprietor saw his guests departing, vowing never again to enter an establishment where the waiters knew their favorite vintage and never even bothered asking the guests their desires.

The monkey lived in a common beer hall a block away, and as a favorite he received plenty of beer. But he decided that he wanted wine, broke his chain and made a dash for the wine restaurant. The guests, who had just begun their daily tirade against the present and spoke reverently of the golden past, resented the intrusion and tried to capture the animal, which defended itself by throwing glasses and bottles.

It was when the monkey skipped lightly from the bald head of an ex-naval officer to the bald head of an ex-army officer that the uproar became general. The Fire Department and the police came, but could not combat against the sharp teeth of the Dayton hero until they had sought out a fencing club and borrowed all the available heavy gloves.

Even then it was only firewater that caused the monkey's downfall. Passing the bar, he seized a bottle containing vodka, probably to use it as a weapon, but when he perched high on a picture of a noted warrior and the pursuit slackened, he drank deeply. His capture followed as soon as the liquor took effect.

BRIEF BUT POINTED

AREA OF UNITED STATES AND CANADA

According to The Eagle Almanac, Canada is larger in area than the United States. Canada has an area of 3,729,665. The area of the United States, including Alaska, is 3,617,673.

RADIUM FROM PARSONITE

Parsonite, a new radium bearing mineral found in the Belgian Congo, was described lately to the Academy of Sciences in an address written by the Belgian Professor Shoef. The paper, says the Scientific American, told of the success that is being met with in extracting radium from the mineral at a special laboratory in Antwerp.

DUELS NOW SERIOUS IN ITALY AS RESULT OF BITTER POLITICS

Personal bitterness growing out of political controversy in Italy is making dueling a serious business rather than a mere formality.

Luigi de Alfonso, Honorary Consul general of the Fascist militia, and former Under-Secretary of State Giuseppe Caradonna, recently added another to the constantly growing list of savage encounters. The two men met in a lonely wood near Rome and fought with sabres under condition permitting any kind of blow.

Signor de Alfonso was seriously slashed three times.

FIVE LARGEST HARBORS

It depends upon what is meant by "largest" and by "harbor." Using the word harbor as a port, and considering only those having on their shores cities of commercial importance, the five largest in area are Port Philip, Melbourne Harbor, Australia, approximately 400 square miles; Yokohama, Japan, 200 square miles; New York City, 175 square miles; San Francisco, 79 square miles. In export and import value the first are New York on the coast; London, England, 67 miles from sea; Hamburg, Germany, 67 miles from sea. In tonnage, the largest are New York, Antwerp and London.

QUI HONORS NOTED DOG

"Owney," the world's greatest dog traveler, who was awarded more than 100 tags and medals because of his "services" in the United States Postoffice departments, has been signally honored at the Government's postoffice exhibit at the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition, in Philadelphia.

The body of the globe-trotter, mounted by a taxidermist after the animal's death in 1897, is on view in the model postoffice in the Exposition grounds. "Owney" was the official mascot of the entire postal force of the country from 1888 to 1897.

HOW TO PLAY QUICK STEP

Two lines are marked on the ground, about 100 feet apart. Five or more may play. One player is chosen to be the counter and he stands on one line with his back to the other players. The others stand on the opposite line. The counter then

counts rapidly and loudly while the players on the line behind him walk quickly toward his line. As he stops counting he turns, and if he sees anyone moving, calls his name, and that player has to go back and start over. The others continue to advance toward the counter's line, but only while he is counting. The counting continues until all have crossed the line where the counter stands, and the last one over must change places with the counter.

A BUTTON'S HISTORY

A most unique relic of war is possessed by George Clutch, commander of the Isham Keith (G. A. R.) post in Columbus, Indiana. It is a button off a private soldier's uniform. During the latter part of the war, Mr. Clutch's brother-in-law, J. F. Gallaher, whose home is in Ohio, had the misfortune to be captured and confined in Libby Prison. The story of how the prisoners in that hole suffered and died from starvation, exposure and ill-treatment is a part of history. After Mr. Gallaher had been there some time, he began to feel the need of money, which would enhance the prospect of reaching the Union lines should he succeed in making his escape. A surgeon of his regiment, who was in the prison, was about to be exchanged. He cut off one of the large brass buttons from his uniform, and, separating the two parts of it, made a cavity by taking out the filling.

He then wrote on a slip of blank paper, in a small, but distinct hand, the following note to his wife, which he inclosed in the cavity, and again sealed the button together:

"Libby Prison—Dear Wife—If we are not exchanged by 1st of December send me thirty dollars in greenbacks. Put in a vial canned up in a can of tomatoes or blackberries. Send it in a box of provisions.
J. P. GALLAHER."

This note is well preserved, and was still resting snugly in its place in the button when shown by Mr. Clutch. To continue the story, the button was made to take the place of another on the uniform of the exchanged surgeon, who reached home and delivered it to Mrs. Gallaher in due time. It could not have escaped the close scrutiny of the officers had it been conveyed out of the prison in any other manner, as the officers were particular to search all of the exchanged prisoners, including the surgeon, most minutely.

Mr. Gallaher did not have much hope that his scheme would succeed, even should the note reach his wife, but he was surprised, for the fruit arrived in a short time, and although closely inspected by the prison officials, they failed to discover the vial containing the money concealed in one of the jars of thick preserves. Soon after receiving the money Mr. Gallaher succeeded in making his escape from prison, being one of the chief participants in the great tunnel expedition. He found the thirty dollars obtained in so novel a manner to be of great service to him in reaching the Union lines. When Mr. Clutch was in Ohio a short time ago he was given the button and its contents to keep as a memento, and it is greatly prized as such.

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